

# THE BRAILLE MONITOR

INKPRINT EDITION

VOICE OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND



The National Federation of the Blind is not an organization speaking for the blind—it is the blind speaking for themselves.

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## THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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## BLINDNESS: THE TRIPLE REVOLUTION

by  
Kenneth Jernigan

In the field of blindness and the world of the blind a revolution is in the making. In fact, it is not one revolution but three—a triple revolution—which aims at nothing less than the overthrow and reconstruction of three great bastions of our society. They are: the bastion of public opinion; the bastion of official ideology; and the inner bastion, or state of mind, of the blind themselves.

Let me be clear about the nature of this struggle. We who wage it are rebels with a cause—but ours is a revolution without rancor and an enterprise without enmity. We intend no casualties and seek no prisoners. We believe that no blood need be shed, nor even tears—but only chains. For our revolutionary aim is to strike the bonds that bind the lives of all blind people. They are many: the rusty chains of custom, the ankle irons of prejudice, the silver cord of paternalism, and the red tape of bureaucratic regulation.

It is not only the lives of the blind that are thus bound and shackled. Most cruelly and crucially, it is their minds. And not only the minds of those of us who are blind—but the minds of men in general, and of the professionals who work with the blind in particular. Our revolution, then, is a war for the minds of men: for the official mind, for the public mind, and for the mind of the blind man himself.

Let us, briefly, reconnoiter each of these formidable bastions before we turn our fire on them. What is the content of the Official Mind with regard to blindness and the blind? What is there in the attitudes of agencies, of administrators of programs and of workers with the blind, that requires such a frontal attack?

First of all, the official mind is divided. The profession of rehabilitators, of welfare workers, of counselors and trainers—of all those who labor in the field of services to the blind—suffers from a schism in the soul. On one side are good will, good faith, and good sense—a profound respect for the dignity and capacity of every blind person. On the other side are ill will, weak faith, and poor sense—a profound disbelief in the normality and ability of any blind person.

There is certainly much that could be said about what is right and proper in the official mind, as opposed to what is negative, prejudicial, and destructive. Let us acknowledge with appreciation the part that is worth preserving, but let us not forget or ignore the remainder which must be altered. In much of its attitude toward blindness and the blind the official mind is polluted, clogged with dead assumptions and decayed reading matter, swollen with the poisons of prejudice, reeking of the foul air of condescension and contempt.

Many of the very people who administer and work in the governmental and private agencies established to provide services to the blind have all of the misconceptions and false notions about blindness possessed by the public at large.

Do I exaggerate? Consider this declaration by an official of the American Association of Ophthalmology, as professional a voice as one could wish: "Sight," he says-repeating an old wives' tale which such experts always drag out but none to my knowledge has ever verified-"sight provides the average individual with at least 80 percent to 90 percent of the knowledge of his environment. Sound waves can be heard at best only a few miles, but light waves travel the seemingly limitless expanses of the universe to show us the distant stars."<sup>1</sup> The old sophistry. Sight means light, means illumination, means enlightenment. Lack of sight means darkness, means emptiness, means ignorance. It even means deprivation of the stars-with all that such deprivation implies. And note the quantitative reasoning: the value of sight is infinite, as with light waves; the value of hearing is scant and localized since "sound waves can be heard only a few miles."

But that is not all, not the worst of this official testimony. Our ophthalmologist goes on to say: "Loss of the precious window to the world about us dooms most of the blind to a life of dependency and frustration in a surrounding of perpetual darkness. Even with all our rehabilitation, . . . the income of the blind is usually at the subsistence level. The families of the blind also are often subjected to great hardship because of lost family income or the task of caring for the blind person's physical needs."<sup>2</sup>

There is more to this dreadful account-this account full of dread concerning blindness-but that should be enough to make the ophthalmologist's point, and so to make mine. His point, of course, is that of a professional concerned with prevention of blindness and sight conservation-working purposes indeed. His built-in bias, and therefore his propaganda purpose, is to preach a concept of blindness as an utter disaster and a total blight. He states quite correctly that "even with all our rehabilitation measures, . . . the income of the blind is usually at the subsistence level;" but he goes on to miss the whole point and to ascribe the wrong effect to the wrong cause. When he says that "loss of this precious window to the world about us dooms most of the blind to a life of dependency and frustration in a surrounding of perpetual darkness," he is simply repeating the traditional platitude. Loss of sight need not be a blighting tragedy, and (except in the mind of this man and of people like him) it need not be a calamity. But the misunderstandings and misconceptions which exist-the blind alleys and dead ends of our society-can and do condemn many of the blind to lives of dependency. Such statements as his lend force and credit to the fiction.

If one were to point out to this ophthalmologist his exaggeration, and (which I think impossible) convince him of his error, no doubt he would reply with equanimity that to play on such irrational fears of the public is a means fully justified by the end in view-namely, the preservation of sight and the prevention of blindness. The truth is less important to such an advocate than a fiction sanctified by its supposed service to medical

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1. American Association of Ophthalmology, "Congressional Hearings on H. R. 12843, National Eye Institute Bill," *American Journal of Ophthalmology*, Series 3, Vol. 64, No. 6 (Dec., 1967), (New York: Research to Prevent Blindness, Inc., 1967), p. 1219.

2. *Ibid.*

science and public health.

This is precarious logic, indeed, and even more perilous ethics. But it is the common pattern, if not the besetting sin, of professionals convinced of the paramount importance of their special calling and the need to gain public recognition and acclaim. Thus it is natural enough, however false and foolish, for the insecure and unperceptive eye doctor to believe that eyesight transcends all other attributes and possessions of man, up to and including life itself. Likewise: the ear specialist, the skin specialist, the foot specialist, the hair specialist—and the rehabilitation specialist—can and do make similar boasts on behalf of their specialities. It would all be innocent enough, perhaps, were it not for the serious and even tragic consequences which can issue from such behavior.

Consider the rehabilitation specialist. His occupational bias may lead him to exaggerate both the significance and difficulty of his specialty; to broadcast the impression that it is the hardest thing in the world to teach the blind person anything, although with genius and infinite patience some simple tasks can ultimately be taught, if only by experts such as he.

I am sure this hypothetical description must seem far-fetched to some. Surely no such self-glorifying caricature actually turns up in the real world of rehabilitation counselling and administering. Or does it? Let us see. Here is the very Commissioner himself—the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration, of the Federal Department of Health, Education, and Welfare—the Honorable Joseph Hunt.<sup>3</sup>

“It is the easiest thing in the world,” says Commissioner Hunt in a recent address, “to mislead the public on this subject [of blindness]. They are likely to be in a permanent state of trauma where blindness is concerned, and up to a point will believe anything. So it is crucial to represent both the possibilities and limitations of blind people with scrupulous accuracy . . . .

“The situation is further complicated by a factor always to be dealt with in anything presented in media which cater to the general public—the need to be sensational or picturesque. In this connection, I wish the angle we might present more often to the public were not that adjustment to blindness is a snap for this person or that, but that it comes of very, very, very hard work to learn self-management without the aid of the eye. It is rare indeed when this is not the case.” And the Commissioner continues: “Blind people do not want to be cry babies and are apt to pass some of their difficult performances off lightly. It is up to the agencies to make interviewers of various kinds aware of this . . . .”<sup>4</sup>

There you have it—the insistence of the specialist that what he does is very, very, very hard work; very sensitive and delicate; requiring very special people of very superior talent. No one, I think, would quarrel with this desire to place a high premium upon the skills and

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3. In a recent reorganization of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Joseph Hunt became Deputy Commissioner of the Community Services Administration.

4. Joseph Hunt, Commissioner, Rehabilitation Services Administration, “Tough Idealism,” Paper Delivered at the Cleveland Society for the Blind, March 7, 1968.



talents of workers in rehabilitation—even if it sometimes represents a slight exaggeration of the facts. What is unfortunate is the image this language conveys of the great and laborious difficulty encountered by blind people in learning and mastering the simplest skills of daily living. In short, what is reinforced (perhaps unintentionally) is the old image of the near-helpless blind man, a creature inert and passive until taken in hand by the able and dedicated professional. In short, the notion expressed by the Commissioner is very, very, very wrong.

That is not all of the damage done to us by the pronouncements of Commissioner Hunt. In another speech he adds a further dimension of dependency and helplessness to the pathetic image of blindness. “Far more than for the seeing,” he tells us, “the environment of the blind is made up of human voices, personalities, and characters. And we must make sure, insofar as we are able, that when we plan programs for blind people we offer them people equal to the demands of the situation. For when those who see channel information to those who do not, very difficult social and ethical problems are involved. With a newly blinded individual, for example, it takes a rather well seasoned practitioner, with a natural gift as well, to decide when a situation demands that information be filtered . . . . Later there comes the rather overpowering obligation to convey information, unadulterated in any way, to blind people who are rehabilitated, in full command of their lives, and resolved to know what is going on about them, however unpleasant it may be throughout.”<sup>5</sup> So says Commissioner Hunt; but, as if this were not enough, he goes on to reveal his attitude with this remarkable statement:

“All concerned must repeatedly invoke the old archbishop’s rule for those about to say something: ‘Is it kind? Is it true? Is it necessary?’ ”<sup>6</sup>

What total and complete condescension! Here is a new, or at least newly admitted, conception of the role of the professional in work with the blind—that of filterer or “minister of information” for the blind, who decides which part of reality the blind person—even the fully independent, rehabilitated, and self-supporting blind person—should know about, and which part might better be kept a secret from him. What a contemptuous and belittling, not to say censorious, viewpoint is this! The rehabilitation counsellor, in the Commissioner’s view, is no longer just a counsellor: he is an archbishop, and before he answers any question put to him by the blind client, he must ask himself, “Is it necessary?”

The chief fault with this attitude of the Commissioner’s toward the blind is not its falsity or irrelevance, but its simple disrespect. It radiates a smothering paternalism, an overprotective inclination to screen and filter out all information that might confuse the client or complicate his rehabilitation. It is a form of coddling appropriate to very small children or to idiots—not to normally responsible adults. It takes for granted the superiority

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5. Joseph Hunt, Commissioner, Rehabilitation Services Administration, “Cynosures, Hewers, Haulers, Fetchers, Carriers, Shining Examples, Stormy Petrels...,” Remarks Made at the 50th Anniversary Luncheon of the Minneapolis Society for the Blind, January 17, 1968.

6. Ibid.



of the counsellor, especially the sighted counsellor, and the concurrent inferiority of the blind.

Recently I had occasion to see the workings of the official mind at first hand. I was invited to attend a conference at a large university, which claims to specialize in training home teachers of the blind and mobility instructors. It is recognized by many as a center of advanced thinking, a place for the pioneering of new techniques and the breaking of new paths. The conference was called with the participation and blessing of federal officials to consider new trends and developments in rehabilitation centers for the blind. I took a new staff member to the conference with me to broaden his experience. He happened to be sighted. Being among the first to arrive, we found that we were to stay in a college dormitory. My room was on the first floor, and that of my colleague was on the second. Since we had work to do and a bit of leisure time, and since other participants had not arrived, I went to the dormitory registration desk and asked whether my colleague might be permitted to move to the first floor into the room adjoining mine, which was not occupied. I was told that this could not be done, because there were only enough rooms on the first floor for the blind conference participants. After recovering from the shock of the discovery, I probed the matter and found that all the rooms on the first floor had been reserved for blind persons—since they would, of course, have difficulty with the stairs; and that the rooms on the second floor were to be occupied by the sighted. Partly because I wanted to be able to work more conveniently with my colleague (and partly, it must be admitted, out of annoyance with the situation), I suggested that since my colleague could not move down, I be permitted to move up. There was much resistance, considerable confusion, and no small amount of consternation; but the day was carried, and I moved upstairs to live with the sighted folks.

As far as I am concerned, the most significant event in this story did not occur until the next day. I went to the meeting of administrators and planners and told them what had happened. If the college officials in charge of the training program had planned the segregation, what a damning commentary on their knowledge and philosophy—what implications for the teachers and (of all things) the mobility specialists whom they send forth to train the blind and enlighten the public. If, on the other hand, the dormitory officials had made the arrangement simply by observing what the program at the university had taught them by example, what an equally devastating indictment! And what do you suppose was the reaction of the college officials, the program administrators, and the rehabilitation authorities? They saw no significance in the event at all, and simply passed it off with amused smiles. After such a response, what did it matter what else they might discuss or what theories propound? Their lack of perception—their total unawareness—had already nullified whatever they might say of their plans for tomorrow and their dreams for the future. Mobility, indeed! Experts, indeed! Rehabilitation, indeed!

So much for the Official Mind at work—or, rather, the unreconstructed side of it. As I have already said, there is, of course, another and better side; and it cannot be emphasized too often or too strongly that many employees and administrators in the agencies doing work with the blind believe deeply in our cause and are marching in the ranks with us. But I have said enough, I trust, to demonstrate the existence of a powerful and antagonistic bastion of officialdom which must be breached if the Triple Revolution of the blind is to

succeed. Breach it we must, and breach it we will.

But when we have successfully attacked the bastion of the official mind and occupied its citadel, the struggle will avail us naught unless we also conquer that other broader and stronger bastion—the public mind. Public attitudes toward the blind are hampered by a curious paradox. There is little or no ill will toward us on the part of the public. We are not feared or hated, disliked or despised; yet we are the victims of massive discrimination and prejudice as surely as any resented minority group. Our lives are lived, not under a reign of terror, but beneath a tyranny of kindness. We are the hapless subjects of a benevolent dictatorship of public opinion, which holds us in a kind of colonial status of halfway membership and second-class citizenship.

Let us admit that, bad as this is, it might be worse. Popular attitudes and beliefs about the blind have greatly evolved and improved over the centuries. Babies born blind today are not immediately drowned or abandoned, as was once the case in primitive societies. Blind girls are not generally sold into slavery as prostitutes, nor blind boys into slavery as galley oarsmen, as in the age of the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome. Blind beggars are no longer decorated with donkeys' ears and set to fighting among themselves, as in the fairs of the Middle Ages. Indeed, the beggars are gradually disappearing from our streets. Once totally insecure and unprotected, the blind people of America and the western world today are ringed round with public protections and social security. They are sheltered in shops, oriented in centers, counselled by experts, edified by talking books, compensated by grants, and guided by dogs and canes. Wherever we turn, security is at our elbow—but opportunity is still around the corner. Instead of a place in the sun, as Dr. Jacobus tenBroek used to say, we have been given a shelter in the shade—at the end of a blind alley. For all the good will beamed at us by public opinion; for all the aids and services, boosts and assists, props and prosthetics pressed upon us, we, the blind people of this great society, are not yet really free—not yet fully independent—not yet truly equal.

The primary failure on the part of public opinion of the public mind and will—has been the failure to balance the provision of security with the extension of opportunity and understanding. Good will has not been matched by good works. Charity has not been reinforced with employment. Too many professions are still barred to the blind; too many occupations are denied us; too many jobs are tagged “not feasible”; too many people are willing to give us a quarter, but unwilling to let us earn a dollar. Over and over the proof is given of capacity and talent on the part of blind persons, for this or that trade or calling; over and over the proof is ignored, or forgotten, or denied.

A businessman on the west coast willingly hired a blind secretary, who turned out to be the best among the many secretaries in his large office. The pleased employer soon reported that fact to the rehabilitation agency which had referred the girl. When another opening turned up later in his office and the agency asked him to consider a blind applicant, he flatly rejected the offer with the pious and abused exclamation, “This is a business, not a charity! I have done my bit!”

Here, for another example of the backward thinking of the public mind, is a letter I received recently from the vice president for academic affairs of a midwestern technical

university: "I have been informed that you have desk calculators with Braille output wheels that can be used by blind persons. I will appreciate it if you can tell me the source of such a calculator so that I can pass the information on to a parent who is trying desperately to give her blind son a good education." Why "trying desperately?" Is a good education so very difficult for a blind person to acquire? Is learning so difficult or math so arduous? The desperation is in the mind of the mother; it is in the mind of the administrator; and it will be a miracle if it is not transmitted to the mind of the son as well.

Here is a further illustration. A college student recently wrote as follows: "My blind friend was waiting at a public bus stop adjacent to some establishment which prohibits dogs. The proprietor demanded that he leave because of his guide dog, so my friend phoned for the police. The police officer informed all parties that guide dogs were permitted by law, but he also told my friend that if the proprietor physically forced him off the premises or away from the public bus stop he could not take legal action. The officer said that in Colorado a blind person is not considered a sufficiently competent witness to bring charges into court. What is more, the student's wife, who is not blind and witnessed the incident, would not be allowed to bring charges because she would not be the injured party."

Hence, because of the stereotype which associates blindness with incompetence, the sovereign state of Colorado has apparently seen fit to deprive blind persons of the most basic rights and protections. In the enlightened courts of that state the blind man is not only less than a citizen, he is less than a man. He is, in effect, a "nonperson"—a mute and defenseless creature—legally incompetent, irrelevant and immaterial. Let the thug or the thief, the trespasser or marauder, attack him at will or violate his most fundamental rights: he can make no appeal to the courts.

Although it is particularly vicious, this is not an isolated case. The public records, the everyday conversation of people, and the daily press abound with similar illustrations. Consider, for instance, this editorial from the local newspaper of a city in one of our western states. It reads in part:

"A long-time running feud between Chief of Police Forrest Goodrow and Mayor William Flintoft erupted last week in the dismissal of Goodrow . . . Mayor Flintoft is quoted in the report as having said, 'I feel this action was required for the good of the Police Department' . . .

"One has to wonder just how much the 'good of the department' was on Flintoft's mind when he hired Tom Bush as City Dispatcher. It is wonderful that the handicapped can be employed, and far be it from us to discourage this, but just how did the good of the department figure into it? Bush is blind and it is his further duty to open the cells and evacuate prisoners in the event of a fire. It is also his duty to serve meals to the prisoners. Can he tell which of the bank alarms is sounding in case of a robbery? In short, one has to wonder, is this a job for the blind?

"Not long ago this publication received a letter from an irate parent, bombarding the city because his son had been left in jail without attendance while the duty officer pursued his nightly rounds . . . Well, don't worry, parents, [our city] has a blind man to lead your

wayward sons to safety!”<sup>7</sup>

Several things about this editorial are revealing. The writer believes that the mayor is subject to attack for hiring a blind person and that his act indicates lack of concern for the good of the police department. Apparently it is not even thought necessary to debate the question as to whether a blind person can do the work efficiently—that is, observation of bank alarms, serving of meals, opening and closing cells, and so forth. It obviously has not occurred to the editorial writer that the blind can do such things, so he sets out to get the mayor—blissfully unaware that the kind of routine chores he enumerates are handled daily by blind persons throughout the country.

The public mind, like the official mind, is divided against itself in its attitudes toward us. It is full of charity, but empty of faith and hope. It harbors no ill will or hatred toward the blind; yet, it holds us in custodial thrall, in sheltered captivity, and denies us opportunity and equality as thoroughly as if we were a despised, untouchable caste.

Our battle for the minds of ordinary men, our struggle to win public opinion to our side, must seek to build on the compassion that issues from good will—while striving to eliminate the pity that issues from bad logic.

How can prevailing social attitudes—mired as they are in ancient custom, in simple ignorance, and in sheer prejudice—be modified? I believe there are four main avenues of change: those of education, legislation, administration, and demonstration. We must educate by continuous teaching, preaching, and beseeching. We must convince our lawmakers nationally and locally, to legislate not restrictively but expansively toward wider horizons and newer frontiers of opportunity and access. We must persuade the official mind of administrators, commissioners, and counsellors to move with us out of the dead ends of the past into the open channels of a future worthy of free men. And, finally, we must demonstrate—not just collectively, by acts of confrontation and petition (though these may have their legitimate place in a people’s movement), but also individually, by acts of personal example and initiative.

We shall not strike the chains that bind us at a single blow. The Roman structure of our public laws and institutions was not built, and cannot be rebuilt, in a day. But that which men have wrought, men can put asunder—and then can build again on new foundations, more responsive to the facts of life and the heart’s desire.

The only limitations upon our power to shake the bastions, to move the foundations of society, to make a new world for the blind, are the limitations we place upon ourselves. Where there is a will among us, I assure you there will be a way. There is a compelling precedent in our history. Once before in the recent past, we found that will—and the way opened before us. We summoned the will to organize a generation ago in this land—summoned it from the depths of our poverty and despair—and we made it stick in the

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7. The Issaquah Press, Issaquah, Washington, September 11, 1968, p. 1.

throats of the prophets of doom: for when the blind came to lead the blind, they did not fall into the ditch but rose up together arm-in-arm, astonishing even themselves, to stand on their feet and hold their ground, to break their traditional silence and find their own authentic voice--and with that voice to move mountains and bring down the walls of the almshouse.

The blind people of America have won their classic struggle for the right to organize, the right to speak, and the right to be heard. But there is another battle to be fought and won, for many within the organized blind movement and for even more outside its ranks: an internal battle for the allegiance of their own minds, a struggle to cast out the demons of doubt, disparagement, and disbelief. The battle for the mind, which each blind person must fight within himself, is a war for independence--a crusade for his own freedom.

It is doubtless true still of the majority of blind people that they see themselves as others see them. The images and stereotypes of blindness that prevail in society tend to become the self-images of the blind. But not entirely, not necessarily, and not exclusively. For one thing, there are new and better images of blindness abroad in the land--with new successes to confirm them, new opportunities to reinforce them, and new organizations to support them. The antique myths and stereotypes of gloom and doom no longer hold the field alone; nor can they long survive in open contest with the truth.

What, then, is the truth? The truth is that we the blind are not doomed to dependency, but due for independence; not consigned to isolation but prepared for integration; not condemned to frustration and futility but capable of fulfillment. Let us live up to this truth--let us live this truth--and this truth will make us free.

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## NFB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETS

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Federation of the Blind was held in Des Moines, Iowa on November 29 and 30, 1969. However, for those members arriving early (chiefly the Subcommittee on Budget and Finance), there was the real flavor of an old-fashioned Thanksgiving holiday. Kenneth and Anna Katherine Jernigan had as their guests for dinner some sixteen persons. The main course of the feast was three—not only the huge turkey, but delicious ham and the most toothsome spare ribs ever produced. All of the fixings were in abundance, too.

Previous to the dinner, the Subcommittee on Budget and Finance worked hard all morning drafting a proposed budget for 1970, with President Jernigan joining the group.

The Executive Committee meeting opened early Saturday morning in the Des Moines offices of the NFB and continued throughout the day with all but one member present. The meeting was characterized by a comprehensive review of Federation policies and activities and thoroughgoing planning for the year ahead.

The Committee voted formal acceptance of one new NFB affiliate—The Tar Heel State Federation of the Blind in North Carolina. Detailed planning was made for the formation of additional affiliates.

A lengthy discussion ensued relative to the tax situation in the light of current trends with respect to non-profit organizations and particularly foundations. It was voted that the Federation withdraw its membership from the Conference of Nonprofit Organizations since this has proved not to be an effective vehicle for advancing the cause of such groups.

President Jernigan gave a most thorough report covering all facets of Federation activity, and every member of the Executive Committee gained a clearer understanding of the tremendous work-load being carried by the President as both the cause and the result of the activity in the movement. As one measure of that progress, the growth of the Braille Monitor during this past year is most significant. The number of Monitor readers has more than doubled during 1969 alone. For instance, the talking book issue, which was only started in September of 1968, is already going to about 2,800 readers.

The President then reported in detail on the operation of Fedco, stating that the corporation was doing quite well. The Fedco Board of Directors recently purchased a manufacturing concern making plastic articles, the Nu-Mode Plastics Company which, even though a relatively new business, already has a large back-log of orders.

The Federation has now completed paying in full the purchase price for the Fedco Corporation, the entire note for a half million dollars having been paid off in just two years rather than the five years originally contemplated. This fall the organization mailed out a large number of five-card greeting packets and this mailing is expected to do quite well.

The Executive Committee then discussed at length the situation in the State of Nevada

where the NFB's affiliate, the Nevada Federation of the Blind, finds itself at loggerheads with the state agency administering most services to the blind. After carefully reviewing all aspects of the situation, the Executive Committee formally adopted a resolution pledging full support to the Nevada affiliate in its efforts to improve services for the blind in that State.

The NFB is studying possible legal action in a case of discrimination which has arisen in Seattle, Washington where the owners of the building in which the Space Needle Restaurant is located have steadfastly refused to permit a young blind woman to use the elevator to the top of the building (where the restaurant is located) because she has a guide dog. The NFB will associate itself with our Washington affiliate in the proposed court battle.

The Executive Committee formally vested in the President the authority to prepare the detailed agenda for the 1970 National Convention to be held in Minneapolis.

The Personnel Standards Committee recommended to the Executive Committee that salaries for staff, present and proposed, be brought more nearly in line with prevailing rates for comparable positions in industry and professions throughout the country. These recommendations were adopted.

The President stated that two of the members of the Hawaii Survey Team (which completed its data gathering in the Islands in late November) had canvassed hotels for convention sites for the 1972 Convention. July is the peak month for tourists in Hawaii and the large hotels are mindful that their occupancy rates are high at that time, hence show considerable reluctance in making offers of reasonable rates for hotel rooms. Further negotiating will continue and it is possible that better prices can be secured through "package" plans with the airlines.

The Executive Committee constituted itself a Constitution Revision Committee and went over every Article and Section to see what changes were needed. The one major change was to remove from the separate Affiliate Standards document the essentials and to place these in an Article of the proposed revised constitution which will be presented to the 1970 Convention with the unanimous endorsement of the members of the Executive Committee.

The Chief of the Washington Office of the NFB reported that the House Ways and Means Committee will probably bring out a bill to increase social security benefits by the end of 1969 and that our Disability Insurance for the Blind bill and other matters touching social security will wait for consideration until early in 1970. This will also be true of proposed amendments to the Randolph-Sheppard Act concerning vending stands.

This is a brief summary of the proceedings of the day and a half meeting of the Executive Committee which was marked throughout by an esprit de corps of the membership, reflecting the unity and optimism which pervade all segments of the Federation and the hope and belief of even greater things to come for that movement of the organized blind which the Federation spearheads.

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## A VISIT TO IOWA

by

Nellie Hargrove

As I stepped off the plane at the Des Moines air terminal in mid-afternoon, I was greeted by a very strong and very cold wind; so strong, in fact, in a struggle to get into my top coat, I was almost air-lifted. Thus my first impression of Iowa, very windy and very cold. But, as first impressions usually go, it was incorrect. Once I had reached the hotel, I found the chill was limited to the outside temperature. The people were warm and friendly and the hotel was very comfortable.

My primary purpose for being in Des Moines was to attend the NFB Executive Committee meeting on the 29th and 30th of November. I had asked Dr. Jernigan if I might come a couple days early to tour the Commission for the Blind and observe Iowa's programs for the blind first hand since we are contemplating the establishment of a commission for the blind in my state.

Little more than an hour after I had landed in Des Moines, I was inside the Commission ready to begin my tour. I started with Dr. Jernigan's office. After waiting some few minutes in the reception room, his secretary decided there would be no let-up in his busy routine, so I barged into his office mildly interrupting his late afternoon activities. The amount of work Dr. Jernigan does is almost impossible to believe. He talked with me intermittently while he dictated letters and was interrupted numerous times by urgent phone calls.

Finally, Dr. Jernigan was able to get away from the work in his office and he went with me to tour the Commission facilities. All of the Commission is outstanding. The entire set-up is great and the entire program works with fantastic precision to accomplish its purpose.

My tour lasted into the evening and everything I saw was most interesting. The single program which impressed me most was Iowa's Library for the Blind. Observing the size of this library, there is small wonder that Dr. Jernigan received recognition from the President of the United States because of his efforts in building this facility. The library occupies a tremendous amount of the floor space at the Commission. There are many outstanding things about it. For instance, we went through the room where employees of the telephone company were repairing talking book machines free of charge. I stopped to talk with one of the men who was doing volunteer work and he seemed to feel that Dr. Jernigan was doing him a favor by letting him do volunteer work even though he had put in a full day at his regular job with the telephone company.

There was shelf after shelf of books on tape, talking book disc and in braille. There were rooms for reading equipped with tables which were a certain height for the comfort of the reader of a braille book and couches especially designed with arm rests to accommodate the braille book reader. As we went through the library, Dr. Jernigan ran up and down the stairways like a teenager and I plodded along some distance behind him. You wouldn't believe the physical stamina of this man. I had thought that I was in good physical condition

until I tried to keep up with his running up and down the stairways of that library; fantastic!

The day after Thanksgiving, the Commission was officially closed. However, when I went to the building to finish my tour, I found many of the employees on the job. One of the employees said to me, "This is the only place I have ever worked on my day off and enjoyed every minute of it." I wandered into the office of the bookkeeper and, after being there a short while, I found myself stamping mail. I decided this craze for working hard and enjoying it might be catching so I left to tour some of the cafeterias in Des Moines which are operated by blind persons.

I found Iowa's vending stand and cafeteria program far superior to any I have seen or even read about. Among others, I visited with Neil Butler at his cafeteria in one of the state office buildings. He has a very large operation with all the newest equipment. I was astonished at the size of his cafeteria and also at the volume of business he does. His employees too seemed to be enjoying their work. Maybe this is some sort of mania found all over Iowa.

I stopped back by the Commission for the Blind very late in the day to pick up a package I had left there and found Dr. Jernigan vainly insisting that his employees leave for the day. He was pointing out to them that even if this were a regular day, it would be time to be leaving for the day but this was supposed to have been a day off for everybody. One employee said that he would leave as soon as he finished the report he was working on. On my way out of the Commission, I opened the door to the recreation room and looked in. A warm fire was roaring in the huge fireplace. I asked someone sitting nearby who had started the fire. He told me that Dr. Jernigan had. "When?" I wondered to myself. "When had he had time?"

I think I should tell you, especially those of you who helped to elect me to the Executive Committee, that I was fifteen minutes late to my first committee meeting. I hope all of you are not as ashamed of me as I am of myself. The Executive Committee met in an all day session in the NFB Des Moines office. We adjourned at 5:00 p.m. and on my way out I passed Dr. Jernigan. I remarked to him that I was tired. "Surely you aren't tired. I'm not!" he answered me and he went quickly from that committee meeting to other activities.

Anyone who is considering a visit to Des Moines and who is watching his weight had better give some second thoughts to the matter. I came home five pounds heavier than when I went. At any rate, anyone going to Des Moines had better beware of the dining table of Dr. and Mrs. Jernigan. Mrs. Jernigan's delicious meals, served in gourmet style won't do a thing for your figure, nothing except add inches to it.

A vivid description of Iowa's programs for the blind would be far too lengthy and a comparison of those programs to the programs in my state would be even longer. In a one sentence summary I would have to say that the programs for the blind in my state are at least two decades behind those in Iowa. As someone once said, all of the blind people of the nation cannot go to Iowa to live and Dr. Jernigan cannot be the director of all programs for the blind throughout the nation; therefore, we who live in other states must face the

problem of bringing our programs for the blind up to date.

In Iowa, I saw an independent agency for the blind working closely with the organized blind people of that state and I saw the results of that agency. Living proof that where there is an independent agency with a capable director the blind of that state reap great benefits as a result of the tireless efforts of the dedicated employees of the agency.

On my way home, sitting alone on the plane, I wondered if my own state would ever catch up with Iowa in its services to the blind. I recalled something Dr. Jernigan had said to me during a brief conversation we had had just before I left Des Moines. He had told me that one of the unhappy things I must learn to accept about life was the fact that one cannot always make things happen as quickly as he would like to. Dr. Jernigan, always a teacher, had taught me something during my visit to Iowa.

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#### SENATOR DOLE SPEAKS ON BEHALF OF HANDICAPPED AMERICANS

[Editor's Note: The following remarks by Senator Dole of Kansas were printed in the Congressional Record. While in military service during World War II, Senator Dole was paralyzed in the arms and legs and was hospitalized for thirty-nine months. As a result of physiotherapy and bone and muscle transplants, Senator Dole's only remaining physical handicap is an inability to grasp with his right hand.]

#### HANDICAPPED AMERICANS

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, my remarks today concern an exceptional group which I joined on another April 14, twenty-four years ago, during World War II. It is a minority group whose existence affects every person in our society and the very fiber of our Nation. It is a group which no one joins by personal choice—a group whose requirements for membership are not based on age, sex, wealth, education, skin color, religious beliefs, political party, power, or prestige.

As a minority, it has always known exclusion—maybe not exclusion from the front of the bus, but perhaps from even climbing aboard it; maybe not exclusion from pursuing advanced education, but perhaps from experiencing any formal education; maybe not exclusion from day-to-day life itself, but perhaps from an adequate opportunity to develop and contribute to his or her fullest capacity.

It is a minority, yet a group to which at least one out of every five Americans belongs.

Mr. President, I speak today about 42 million citizens of our Nation who are physically, mentally, or emotionally handicapped.

Who are the handicapped? They are persons—men, women, and children—who cannot

achieve full physical, mental, and social potential because of disability. Although some live in institutions, many more live in the community. Some are so severely disabled as to be homebound, or even bed-bound. Still others are able to take part in community activities when they have access and facilities. They include amputees, paraplegics, polio victims. Causes of disability include arthritis, cardio-vascular diseases, multiple sclerosis, and muscular dystrophy.

While you may have good vision and hearing, many persons live either with limited eyesight or hearing, or with none at all.

While you may enjoy full muscle strength and coordination in your legs, there are those who must rely on braces or crutches, or perhaps a walker or wheel chair.

While you perform daily millions of tasks with your hands and arms, there are many who live with limited or total disability in theirs.

And in contrast to most people, thousands of adults and children suffer mental or emotional disorders which hinder their abilities to learn and apply what is learned and to cope adequately with their families, jobs, and communities.

Then there are those who are afflicted with combination or multiple handicaps.

For our Nation's 42 million handicapped persons and their families, yesterday, today, and tomorrow are not filled with "everyday" kinds of problems which can be solved or soothed by "everyday" kinds of answers. Their daily challenge is: Accepting and working with a disability so that the handicapped person can become as active and useful, as independent, secure, and dignified as his ability will allow.

Too many handicapped persons lead lives of loneliness and despair; too many feel and too many are cut off from our work-oriented society; too many cannot fill empty hours in a satisfying, constructive manner. The leisure most of us crave can and has become a curse to many of our Nation's handicapped.

Often when a handicapped person is able to work full or part time, there are few jobs or inadequate training programs in his locale. Although progress is being made, many employers are hesitant to hire a handicapped person, ignoring statistics that show he is often a better and more dependable worker.

The result is that abilities of a person are overlooked because of disabilities which may bear little or no true relation to the job at hand. The result to the taxpayer may be to support one more person at a cost of as much as \$3,500 per person a year. To the handicapped person himself, it means more dependency.

Consider these statistics: Only one-third of America's blind and less than half of the paraplegics of working age are employed, while only a handful of about 200,000 persons with cerebral palsy who are of working age are employed.

Beyond this, far too many handicapped persons and their families bear serious economic problems—despite token Government pensions and income tax deductions for a few, and other financial aids. . . .

There are other problems—availability and access of health care personnel and facilities at the time and place the individual with handicaps needs them. In my own largely rural State of Kansas Many handicapped persons travel 300 miles or more to receive the basic health services they require.

Education presents difficulties for many parents of handicapped children. Although a child may be educable, there may be few, if any, opportunities in the community for him to receive an education. Private tutoring, if available, is often too expensive. Sadly, to date, the Council for Exceptional Children estimates less than one-third of the Nation's children requiring special education are receiving it.

In rehabilitation, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare said recently 25 percent of America's disabled have not received rehabilitation services and do not know where to seek such help. They estimate that at least 5 million disabled persons may be eligible for assistance.

Other problems the handicapped person faces each day include availability and access of recreation and transportation facilities, architectural barriers in residences and other buildings, and many, many more.

We in America are still far from the half-way point of assuring that every handicapped person can become as active and useful as his capacities will allow. The outlook for the handicapped person in 1969, however, is not altogether bleak. Unparalleled achievements in medicine, science, education, technology as well as in public attitudes have cemented a framework in which the handicapped person today has more opportunities available to him than ever before. Consider first what government is doing.

The story of what the Federal Government, hand in hand with State governments, is doing to help meet the needs of the handicapped is not one that draws the biggest and boldest headlines. Broadly, the story is a "good" one, consisting of achievements in financial assistance, rehabilitation, research, education, and training of the handicapped—a massive effort to help many disabled Americans live as normal, as full and as rich lives as possible.

It is, in part, the story of a man who, at age twenty-one, became a paraplegic after sustaining injuries to his spinal cord and head in an accident while on the job.

In 1968, he joined over 2,300,000 other disabled men and women who have been restored to more productive, useful lives since the State-Federal vocational rehabilitation program began forty-eight years ago.

In 1964, the young man—a high school dropout with a wife and child—was referred to his State's division of vocational rehabilitation where a thorough program of total rehabilitation began. In addition, he was enrolled in a training school and was graduated as a



fully licensed agent.

Today—four years later—he has his own successful insurance business. He and his wife have built a new home and adopted a baby.

It is a measure of America's concern for its handicapped citizens that even fifty years ago, this story could not have been told. It takes place now because the Congress and the Federal Government initiated and guided a vital, vigorous program of vocational rehabilitation. Mr. President, vocational rehabilitation is one of many ways the Federal Government works to aid the handicapped. But none of the Federal programs, necessarily, reaches or helps every handicapped person.

Nevertheless, the role of the Government has been basically successful in terms of numbers assisted, basic research performed, and the movement of increasingly large numbers of persons into more productive, satisfying channels. It demonstrates what Congress and Federal and State governments are doing to help America's handicapped better participate and achieve. . . .

Mr. President, it is in the American tradition and spirit that parallel to Government effort there has developed the vital and growing effort for the handicapped by individuals, business and industry, churches and private, voluntary organizations. It is a herculean task to properly assess the many, far-reaching effects of the private sector—in health care, education, employment; in research, rehabilitation, by fundraising drives and through professional organizations and groups for the handicapped themselves. But it is here in the private sector—with its emphasis on the creativity, concern, and energies of our people—that America has become the envy of the world. Our private economy and the resources of our people have combined to improve the quality of life in America in ways and for persons the Government could not begin to match or reach.

For the handicapped, their achievements have been no less. I shall not today, detail or single out the achievements of the voluntary groups and private enterprise involved in aiding the handicapped. But let the record show that without the sincerity, scope, and success of their efforts—in public information, employment and training, in upgrading health care and education personnel and facilities, in fundraising and in supporting research to conquer or to at least minimize the effects of handicapping conditions—the prospects for the handicapped individuals would not be as hopeful as they are today.

Mr. President, as new public and private programs are developed, as old ones are strengthened and some, perhaps eliminated, as we in Congress allocate comparatively limited funds to help the handicapped, the responsibilities and opportunities loom large before us.

We must insure our efforts and money are not misplaced or misdirected—that they do not just promise, but really do the job.

Are we all doing our best to see that all the knowledge, information, money and other help is consolidated and available to the handicapped person in the form he can use and at the time and place he most needs it? Is there sufficient coordination and planning between

and among the private groups and the Government agencies to avoid multiplicity and duplication so that we best serve America's handicapped? Are we sometimes engaged in a numbers race--attending to cases that respond more quickly in order to show results to donors, members and taxpayers, thus sacrificing some attention which should be focused on the really tough problems?

Many handicapped persons of our Nation are no longer helpless or hopeless because of private and public efforts which have helped them to better help and be themselves. But the fact remains that some of our Nation's handicapped and their families are attacking the very programs and projects created to help them. Some are disillusioned and disaffected by the programs.

Too often, the information, the services, the human help and encouragement are not reaching the person for whom they were intended and at the time and place he needs them.

Some sincerely believe there may be better ways we can demonstrate our concern and thereby better achieve for the person with handicaps the independence, security and dignity to which he is entitled. . . .

Our handicapped citizens are one of our Nation's greatest unmet responsibilities and untapped resources. We must do better.

With this in mind, I suggest the creation of a Presidential task force or commission to review what the public and private sectors are doing and recommend how we can do better. Composed of representatives of the public and private sectors, this task force or commission could provide an overview of how to provide the handicapped more help and hope.

Such a task force or commission could provide valuable assistance to Congress and the administration as we develop programs and allocate comparatively limited funds for the handicapped. It could also help private organizations and voluntary groups conduct their efforts more efficiently and effectively.

The goal of a task force or commission, to achieve maximum independence, security and dignity for the individual with handicaps, should encompass the total needs of the handicapped, not just employment or education or any other single factor. Rather the task force or commission should concern itself with the whole broad spectrum of needs and services, because as I have pointed out the problems of the handicapped do not begin and end with the handicap itself.

Although there are hundreds of areas a task force or commission could review, I am hopeful, if created, it would include the following subjects.

First. Expansion of employment, transportation and recreation opportunities for the handicapped.

Second. A directory or central clearinghouse to help inform the handicapped person and his family of available public and private assistance. There are many helpful handbooks



and information sources available. But most are not comprehensive and are more accessible to professionals in the field than to the handicapped who really need the guidance and information.

Third. Removal of architectural barriers. Many persons cannot secure employment or fill their leisure hours because their disabilities bar use of the facilities. It is just as easy to build and equip buildings so that the handicapped and unhandicapped can use them. The Federal Government is doing this now for federally financed structures.

Fourth. More development of health care on a regional or community basis. This is a tough, but priority matter and one which cannot be accomplished quickly or inexpensively. But we must begin to move toward more adequate health care facilities and personnel which serve each person at the time and place he needs them.

Fifth. Better serving the special educational needs of the handicapped. Both the person and the Nation suffer when any educable child--handicapped or unhandicapped--does not receive an education.

Sixth. Income tax deductions and/or other financial assistance to extend relief to more handicapped persons and their families.

Seventh. More attention on the family of the handicapped person. These are the people who often need a degree of encouragement, counseling and "rehabilitation" themselves. Are there services we should provide to family members whose own lives and resources are deeply affected by the presence of a handicapped person?

Eighth. Increased dialogue and coordination between private and voluntary groups and Government agencies to avoid multiplicity and duplication.

What is at stake is not the agency, group or program. What is at stake is the future of the handicapped person with his own abilities and potentialities.

This, then, Mr. President, is the sum and substance of my first speech in the Senate. I know of no more important subject matter, not solely because of my personal interest, but because in our great country some 42 million Americans suffer from a physical, mental, or emotional handicap. Progress has been and will continue to be made by Federal and State governments, by private agencies, and individual Americans; but nonetheless there is still much to be done, if the handicapped American: young, old, black, white, rich, or poor is to share in the joys experienced by others. The task ahead is monumental, but I am confident that there are forces in America ready and willing to meet the challenge--including, of course, many of my distinguished colleagues who by their acts and deeds have demonstrated their great interest. . . .

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## THE RIGHT TO VOTE IN NEW YORK

[Editor's Note: On October 1, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Scribner of Schenectady, New York, went to the polls to vote in a School Board election. When their turn came, Mr. Scribner was told he could not vote because he is blind. The following story is an account of the resulting correspondence between William Dwyer, President of the Empire State Association of the Blind and NFB President Kenneth Jernigan as well as a letter to Mr. Dwyer from Dr. Clarence J. Spain, Director of Research, Child Accounting and Testing of the Schenectady Public Schools.]

In a letter dated October 7 to NFB President Kenneth Jernigan, Bill Dwyer wrote of a case of blatant discrimination against a blind man, Mr. Ernest Scribner, in Schenectady, New York. When Mr. Scribner attempted to vote in a School Board election, "he was told he could not vote because he required assistance and they could not let him have assistance. Ernie had voted in the same place in the regular elections and so advised the people in charge of the polls. Ernie and Frances are members of our Tri-City Chapter and they put up a fuss. A lady in charge produced a book and read to them that 'any person who is incapacitated and requires assistance in voting will not be allowed to vote.' "

The situation became increasingly confused when the Schenectady School Board was asked to cite the law on which their action in regard to Mr. Scribner had been based. Although they were insistent that such a law existed, no one seemed able to find it. And the New York State Board of Education was equally certain that no such law did exist. The Schenectady School Board then decided that they must have received their instructions for dealing with the handicapped in a letter from the State Board of Education, but the latter denied ever having sent such a letter.

According to Mr. Dwyer, "Schenectady now says that their attorney interpreted the [General Election] law this way and wrote a letter to the Education Department asking them if the above interpretation was correct. When he received no reply, he assumed he had been correct and inserted the section in the handbook on elections. Some fun. . . .

"Oh yes, we gave the story to television, the newspapers, and a talk show. We got lots of publicity and a lot of hot heads in the Schenectady Board of Education."

In his reply of October 15, Mr. Jernigan said, "The problem faced by the Scribners illustrates once again (if, indeed, the matter needs illustrating) the reason for the existence of the organized blind movement. As long as the climate of opinion in any city in our nation is such that a blind citizen can be turned away from the polls and denied the right to vote, not one of us has true freedom or equality. We do not live in isolated pockets, and attitudes in one community will spill over into the next--and, for that matter, throughout the nation . . . . By all means, I think you should pursue the matter and settle it locally if you can. . . . Please keep me informed."

Within the following month the matter had been settled due to the effort and persistence of the New York affiliate and its Tri-City Chapter. As Bill Dwyer wrote to

President Jernigan in late November, "We gave the Schenectady School Board so much trouble over the Scribner case that Dr. Clarence Spain has decided to let all handicapped persons vote, vote, vote." Dr. Spain had written that "all eligible voters, regardless of handicap, will be allowed to vote in any and all future Schenectady School Board elections. Assistance will be permitted as stated in the General Election law. . . ."

As Mr. Dwyer explained, "The General Election laws state specifically that a handicapped person is allowed to have help voting if it is needed. It points out that a member from each of the two parties will accompany the voter inside the curtain to be sure the vote is cast properly. Another section of the law stipulates that a parent, child, or spouse may accompany a handicapped voter when he votes."

The problems faced by the Scribners arose because the portion of the General Election laws pertaining to School Board Elections says nothing about the rights of the handicapped to have assistance. It was not until those rights were challenged and the Scribners, with the support of the NFB affiliate, chose to fight back, that the correct interpretation was placed on the voting law, enabling the blind to vote in School Board as well as general elections. The final chapter in this dispute will be concluded when the Empire State Association of the Blind successfully carries through its plans to make these changes a part of the official voting law by asking the State Legislature to pass them in their 1970 session.

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## MICHIGAN PHYSICIAN VINDICATED

by

Lawrence Marcelino

The Wall Street Journal of November 3, 1969 reports that Dr. Sanford Polansky of Benton Harbor was vindicated after having been criticized for the Medicaid fees which were paid to him. Benton Harbor has special meaning to me. It was one of the communities which I visited as a member of the NFB organizing team that worked in the State of Michigan. I found a number of wonderful blind people there who were keenly interested in the Federation and in organizing the Benton Harbor Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind in Michigan.

But to get back to Dr. Polansky:

The good doctor received \$169,000 in Medicaid payments in 1968 and gave the money back to Michigan Blue Shield because he said he was being unfairly criticized. Now he is going to get his \$169,000 back again.

Michigan Blue Shield, which administers federally backed Medicaid funds in the state, announced that an investigation of Dr. Sanford Polansky's Medicaid payments showed he both delivered the services to patients as claimed and often did it at lower fees than he normally charged or that other doctors in the state normally charged. The Benton Harbor

doctor had given the money back to Blue Cross and asked it to disallow any unsubstantiated claims.

“There were no indications that services rendered by Dr. Polansky exceeded acceptable norms,” said John C. McCabe, Michigan Blue Shield President. When Dr. Polansky sent Blue Shield a check for \$169,000 in August, he said he often worked seven days a week, twelve hours a day, caring for patients he said other doctors wouldn’t see. His Medicaid payments—said to be the highest of any doctor in Michigan—were primarily for treatment of indigent and disadvantaged persons.

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MEET OUR STATE PRESIDENT—ROBERT E. WHITEHEAD  
AND OUR STATE AFFILIATE--KENTUCKY



I was born in 1903 in the small mining town of DeKoven in western Kentucky. During my first year of school a bout with the measles left me with very little sight. Nevertheless I continued in public school through the fourth grade until 1914 when my father, mother, two sisters, and I moved to Coalgate, Oklahoma. A Catholic school across the street from my new home accepted me as a student and I completed the fifth grade there. By the end of that year, however, the Sisters and my family decided that I should attend the School for the Blind in Muskogee. Six years later I graduated with a high school diploma and the skills of piano tuning and broommaking, which provided me with a means of employment for the next few years.

In 1923 we moved back to Kentucky. Three years later the Kentucky School for the Blind hired me to teach piano tuning, shop work, and poultry raising. While at the School I met, and, three years later, married Lillian Pierce, supervisor at the School. At first we

worked with the Kentucky Farm for the Blind, but the combination of politics and the depression caused this project to be discontinued only three years later. From there I went to work for the Kentucky Industries for the Blind. In 1935 we opened a snack bar in the Snead Building which we operated until 1969. We are presently enjoying retirement and our Federation of the Blind work.

For many years I served as First Vice President of the Kentucky Federation of the Blind and in 1962 the organization did me the honor of electing me President. I am now serving my eighth term in that office. I am a member of the Governor's Advisory Committee to Services for the Blind and have recently been appointed to a third term as Chairman. In addition, I am a member of the Governor's Commission on Employment of the Handicapped. I am a Deacon in a Baptist Church, a Lion and a Mason.

The Kentucky Federation of the Blind was founded in 1948 upon the principle that the blind themselves should unite and take the leadership in solving their common problems. The ultimate goal of the Kentucky Federation is the complete integration of the blind into society. This involves the removal of legal, economic, and social discriminations; the education of the public to new concepts concerning blindness; and the achievement of each and every blind person of the right to work along with their sighted fellows in the professions, common callings, skilled trades, and regular occupations. The Federation is working toward the achievement of these goals by legal reforms, public education and work with blind people on an individual or organizational basis. For many years, the Kentucky Federation of the Blind has proposed and supported urgently needed state legislation which is now fulfilling many of the needs of the blind. As the Kentucky affiliate of the National Federation of the Blind, the Federation likewise supports national legislation and other activities of the national organization which has as its ultimate goal the complete integration of the blind into society on a basis of equality.

We now have four chapters in the Kentucky Federation and are in the process of organizing two more. There are thirty-nine vending stands in the state, a figure which represents the employment of sixty people. The vending stand program is largely the result of the effort and cooperation of the Kentucky Federation. Our legislative record is another among our accomplishments: Kentucky has a very progressive travel law; its voting law for the blind is one of the best; and its education of the blind is very good. One major aid in the accomplishment of our objectives is the Kentucky Federation's publication, the Braille Cardinal, a magazine issued in braille and inkprint. For fundraising, we have most recently sponsored picnics and candy sales. It is my opinion that the Kentucky Federation of the Blind, working in partnership with the National Federation of the Blind, has had a great part in making Kentucky fifth in the nation in work for the blind.

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## RAMI RABBY TESTIFIES

[Editor's Note: Following is testimony delivered before the Board of Education of the City of Chicago by Rami Rabby, President of the Illinois Congress of the Blind.]

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Board: My name is Rami Rabby, and I am President of the Illinois Congress of the Blind. The organized blind movement in this country, and, in Illinois speaking and acting through the Illinois Congress of the Blind, seeks to improve the quality of life of blind persons, and achieve greater opportunity, equality and security for the blind, in all areas of human endeavor, by means of legislation, litigation, public education and self-education.

We are here, today, primarily in order to break what I would call the "cycle of isolation" to which the blind, the visually handicapped, and the otherwise physically handicapped are subjected in our social and economic life, and the cause of which is basically rooted in the very structure and process of our system of education. As you well know, the regulation which requires all candidate teachers applying for positions in the public elementary and high schools to pass a physical examination has rendered it impossible for a blind or otherwise physically handicapped candidate to teach in Chicago's public schools. We believe that the philosophical notion behind this regulation is economically unsound, morally reprehensible and educationally quite indefensible and unworthy of a school board whose aim, we presume, is to provide Chicago's children with competent teachers and adequate teaching facilities, today, in order that the City of Chicago may boast of a fine, productive and talented citizenry, tomorrow; for what this regulation assumes is that competence or incompetence in teaching are determined by the possession or lack of sight or a perfect human form.

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Board: I need hardly impress upon you that in our schools today, bad as well as good teachers abound, and that in some of our classrooms, indiscipline is rife and the law of the jungle prevails. In other words, it appears that it is not the gleam in the teacher's eye or his or her physical shape which draws the line between teaching competence and incompetence, but rather is the personality of the teacher the determining factor, his or her commitment, conviction, intellect and respect which he engenders in the class before him.

The Illinois Congress of the Blind submits to you that blind persons not only can teach, but do so successfully, outside the city of Chicago and in other cities and states of the Union. The presence of blind and otherwise physically handicapped teachers, as models of success, in the classroom, playing an influential role in our education process, will serve not only as a spur to the handicapped children in our school system whose employment horizons are so dim, but will also enlighten the sighted youth and future leaders and employers of our society as to the true nature of blindness and the true capabilities of blind persons. Again, I return to what I earlier called the "cycle of isolation" of the physically handicapped. If handicapped teachers are excluded from the classroom, and frank and open discussion of blindness and other physical handicaps is eliminated from the curriculum, today's physically handicapped child will grow up to be tomorrow's economically

handicapped adult, and so the vicious circle will continue.

Throughout this year, the Illinois Congress of the Blind has introduced and tirelessly pressed for the enactment of the White Cane Law. On August 6th, the law was signed by the Governor and placed on the statute books. The White Cane Law represents a "Bill of Rights" for the blind of Illinois. One of its provisions declares it to be a state policy that blind persons, if otherwise qualified, be employed in the public sector, in agencies which are financed either in whole or in part, by public funds, and that they be not barred from such employment merely on grounds of blindness. We intend to test the strength of this law in the courts, and we do not intend to fail.

Meanwhile, however, the Illinois Congress of the Blind urges you strongly to rid yourselves of the pernicious philosophy behind this regulation regarding the physical examination of candidate teachers, for it has no place in a society which seeks to achieve happiness for the disadvantaged through the maximum participation of the disadvantaged in charting the course of their own destiny, and at a time when the full and effective utilization of what human resources and talents we have constitutes the sole and true answer to the attainment of our national goals. The Illinois Congress of the Blind desires to participate in this endeavor, and urges you to help us do so.

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## SUCCESSFUL SAUNA SHOP

by

Jeanette Quinn

[Editor's Note: The following was published in the Burlington (Iowa) Hawk-Eye under another title.]

A bell tinkles the arrival of patrons at Ewing's Sauna and Massage center. Some stores and service centers use such bells as distinctive greetings. But at Ewing's the bell tells the blind proprietor that someone has come for help with a health problem.

Howard "Rich" Ewing, forty-one, owner of the center and qualified in the Swedish massage type of physiotherapy, was classified as industrially blind in childhood. He has been totally blind due to a detached retina since the age of twenty-three.

Terry Jamison, local State Employment Service director, points to Ewing as an earning-example of those featured in "Hire the Handicapped Week".

A graduate of the state's School for the Blind at Vinton, Ewing said he wanted to become a physical therapist but learned that students of that profession must possess at least one-third vision, according to some states' laws. He is a graduate of Chicago's College of Swedish Massage.



"The Iowa Commission for the Blind set me up in business on Sunnyside in 1965," Ewing said, "as part of a beauty center, and when that portion of the business closed after seven months, I moved the equipment--and added more--at this site."

Treatment in the building up of muscle tone or in the breaking down of fatty tissue at Ewing's is by appointment and center membership only. "But it isn't difficult to join the club," Ewing said. "I'm here Monday through Friday, 9 to 9, and this shop has the equipment to help with definite body problems," he added.

Toning and the relief of the effects of sprains, bruises and arthritis are main concerns in the massage section of the center. "Physicians sometimes prescribe massage for their patients," Ewing said. He pointed out that if a doctor will say that the treatments a masseur can give are necessary, a customer can deduct the cost from his income tax.

There are two fiber glass steam baths at the center and two sauna baths with dry temperatures from electrically heated bricks of 175 degrees and three massage booths. Both the sauna baths and steam cabinets help with fluid loss and so with weight loss. The baths help eliminate muscle soreness from exercise, according to the masseur.

Ewing hires a man and a woman as part-time help.

There are infra-red lamps, deep heat therapy machines and a machine which doubles in ultra-sonic and diathermy treatments. . . .

Most of Ewing's customers are women, but men, too, show up regularly to use hip shapers, abdominal muscle agitators, bicycles--fourteen pieces of equipment in all. "Women don't want to sweat," Ewing said. "They don't like to get their hair mussed, but sweating makes the exercise easier."

Individual charts for the customers are kept on clipboards, ready for self-checking. For Ewing's use the charts are identifiable in Braille, also. "There is no one good exercise," Ewing said. "Exercises must be grouped to cover all the body's muscles." . . .

Before beginning the program, customers complete medical forms. Ewing said that if problems indicate a need, he asks them to have a doctor suggest particular exercises, recommending the equipment each can safely use.

"The best way to either gain or lose weight," Ewing explained, "is by exercise and special diet." He encourages those who sign with him for treatments to get into the habit of stopping in for exercise, regularly.

"Customers usually sign for thirty-six visits to the center," Ewing said. "Maybe the first eighteen visits will be for conditioning, and then there can be a difference in measurement." Every twelve trips the customer is weighed and measured. There's no set price, according to Ewing; the cost depends on the services, and needs vary.

As high as fifteen or twenty use the center daily, he said, with evenings the busiest

time. Mornings are open, if local housewives want to enroll, Ewing said.

It's hard to believe that Ewing is blind. His center is antiseptically clean, he walks through the space with steady assurance. He turns lights on for others, since he doesn't need them. Ewing's world is neither black nor gray. "I remember color and brightness," he said, "so when someone says the sun is shining, I can visualize it."

His wife and four children live in Davenport and he commutes there frequently. "It seems economically best to retain my residence and business here," he said.

Handicapped? "The only handicap I have is in the minds of others, that's my limiting factor--not blindness," Ewing explained.

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## COLORADO CONVENTION

by  
Lyle Neff

At the Holiday Inn, in Colorado Springs, Colorado, on November 8, 1969, the NFB state convention was held. Registration was begun at nine o'clock; and the convention was called to order by Ruth Ashby, President, at ten o'clock. The invocation was pronounced by Pastor John McCracken, one of the Federation members. We were then greeted by the Mayor of Colorado Springs who because of his warmth and friendliness made all of us feel very welcome in that city. The morning session was for the most part taken up with business affairs, although one important highlight, was the passing of a revised state constitution. We adjourned for lunch at noon and were called back into session at one-thirty.

The first speaker of the afternoon was Dr. Grace Napier, Department of Special Education, Colorado State College in Greeley, who talked about the education of teachers for the purpose of educating the handicapped. Dr. Hardenbergh, ophthalmologist, of Boulder, Colorado, discussed new devices to help many kinds of blindness. Mr. Wiibur Fulkner, principal of Colorado Springs School for the Blind, talked about the new buildings the blind are occupying. We were all glad to learn that the deaf and blind no longer share the school building as they used to do. Next speaker on the program was Mr. Claud Tynar who talked about what rehabilitation was doing and his hopes as to what it can do in the future. We were all glad to hear John Taylor of Iowa give a very inspirational address on blind people asserting their rights instead of just sitting back and taking what society thinks the blind can do successfully. After Dr. Taylor's speech a panel discussion was held among the speakers of the afternoon. After the panel discussion questions were allowed to be directed to any of the speakers on the stage. This led to a very enlightening exchange of views.

Among the resolutions passed were the following: money was voted to help the Braille Monitor. Financial aid was also voted to the International Federation of the Blind. This resolution meant a great deal to the members in Colorado because Denver Area had been

giving Braille books to blind schools overseas. Dr. Isabelle Grant during trips to other countries had interviewed children that had actually been helped by these books. Dr. Grant had interviewed these children on tapes and Mr. Harvey Cox has been busy editing these for distribution to other state NFB affiliates. Another resolution agreed to by all members was that each member of the Colorado NFB contact the legislature to try again during the next session to have passed the White Cane law. The formal convention was then adjourned.

The same evening a banquet was held and everyone enjoyed a delicious turkey dinner. The invocation was given by Bishop Richard L. Williams. Our banquet speaker was John Taylor who gave an interesting talk on the History of Blindness. During 1969 four new affiliates were added to the state NFB: Arkansas Valley, Colorado Springs Council, Pourdre-Thompson Association, and Weld County Association. The affiliates were all given charters and this was really a highlight to all of us. The William E. Wood award was given to Delbert Whittenauer, Jr. The outstanding award was given to Helen Hubman for her untiring work in brailleing even in some cases by hand for the blind through the Red Cross. We ended the day with a dance social. All of us went away feeling that the convention had been a real stimulating one and that we had certainly spent a memorable November eighth.

The following officers were elected: President, Ruth Ashby, 139 South Julian Street, Denver, Colorado 80219; First Vice-President, Ray McGeorge, Denver; Second Vice-President, Carl Coleman, Colorado Springs; Treasurer, Mrs. Georgia Cox, Denver; Correspondence Secretary, Mrs. Pat Jones, Denver; Recording Secretary, Lyle Neff, Denver. The board members chosen were: Arkansas Valley, Frank Tortorelli; Colorado Springs, Erma Johnson; Denver, Paul Haskins, Keith James, and Marge Gallien; Pourdre-Thompson, Linda Gibson, and from Weld County, Bill Monk.

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## RED TAPE FORCES BLIND MAN TO SHUT NEWSSTAND

by

Arvis Chalmers

The Knickerbocker News' Capitol Reporter

The blind operator of the newsstand at the State Capitol has quit and it may be quite a while before the State Commission for the Blind can find a replacement.

Raymond Arnold of Albany, shut up shop this week, and outlined a long list of complaints that add up to bureaucratic red-tape and general government laxity.

As the private operator of the newsstand, Mr. Arnold must bill various state agencies and legislative groups for the newspapers they order.

He is now almost \$2,400 out of pocket in past-due accounts because it takes most government units from one to three months to get their newspaper vouchers to the State Department of Audit and Control for payment.

And Audit and Control takes weeks to process the claim and send him the check.

The governor's office usually is from one to two months behind in paying, Mr. Arnold says. "And the State University hasn't paid a dime in three months," he added, noting its monthly bill runs about \$100.

One State Senate office owes him for its daily newspaper order for August, September and most of October. This same Senate office also owes him for the month of July, when the stand was being operated by another person.

To keep his small business venture alive, Mr. Arnold appealed to the government's office, whose newspaper purchases alone total between \$600 and \$650 a month, to provide faster payment of bills, including their own.

The State Budget Division is reported to have looked into the situation, along with the State Department of Audit and Control, and found that Mr. Arnold isn't alone in having to wait and wait for payment.

Most businesses dealing with the state, it seems, understand they may not get paid for months.

But, if you are a blind person, married and operate a newsstand in the State Capitol, you can't tell the Hamilton News Company, which provides most of your newspapers and magazines, to be patient and wait for its money until the state gets around to giving it to you.

Stanley E. Len, an employe of the State Commission for the Blind, reports he personally has visited many state agencies and legislative offices to ask that the vouchers be submitted on time.

When Mr. Arnold quit this week, Mr. Len said it was unlikely the newsstand would be reopened. "Nobody wants it," he said. "It's long hours and little pay."

The stand is operated under the guidance of the State Commission for the Blind, as a private business for a blind person.

Mr. Len said the Commission had offered Mr. Arnold \$3,000 to keep his stand open, but that the offer was refused.

Mr. Arnold replied: "Sure, they said take this loan and keep open, but I had no idea when I'd get the money and I still had to pay it back. The business just isn't worth all the aggravation and trouble."

The blind operators of stands in state buildings are not state employes. They have no retirement rights, no health insurance, no sick leave, no vacation leave, and they pay their own Social Security costs.

Despite all the state laws governing work hours and minimum pay, to operate the Capitol newsstand takes about eleven hours a day and produces—after long delay—a return of from \$75 to \$140 a week.

In addition, the State Commission for the Blind takes a double tax from the persons they were set up to aid.

The blind operator of a stand pays his regular state and federal income tax, based on the income of his small business. plus a second “levy” which the commission takes from him.

This extra tax, which the commission levies is \$1,030 a year for the operator who makes \$7,000 a year. And, if he makes more, then the commission takes a 50 per cent bite out of everything over \$7,000.

Mr. Arnold decided he’d had enough of this kindly state benevolence.

As of today, he doesn’t have a job and because he blew a few whistles on how the state operates, including chauffeur-delivered papers to state officials’ homes at taxpayer expense, he may not get any further state help.

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## HEALER IN A FOGGY WORLD

by

Ruth Ann Ganson

[Editor’s Note: The following story was published in the Port Arthur (Texas) News.]

“I see ghosts, I guess you’d say. It’s a very foggy world in which I live,” said Dr. Isaac Hill of Port Arthur, one of “darn few” practicing physicians who are blind. Dr. Hill, who practiced medicine in Port Arthur fifteen years before becoming blind in 1967, said that “for awhile everything was just black, black, black.” Now Dr. Hill is able to see ghost-like outlines and some colors. “I can tell if the light is turned on, and I can see doorways, and I can see the shape of you sitting there,” Dr. Hill said.

Dr. Hill had been blind in his left eye for three years before he was operated for glaucoma of the right eye just before Christmas of 1967. “My eye bled during the operation,” Dr. Hill said. The result was legal blindness.

When he had recovered from his operation, Dr. Hill attended classes for four months at the V. A. hospital blind rehabilitation center at Hines, Illinois. “It was a six-to-eight-month course,” he said, “but I wanted to learn everything and get out.” . . .

Dr. Hill’s medical information comes from the Audio-Digest Foundation of Southern



California. "I just put the tapes on the recorder and listen to it read," Dr. Hill said. Dr. Hill reads braille but said, "I don't really need it except to make a brief note to myself." He uses a braille writer to write telephone numbers and short messages for himself. . . .

Dr. Hill has a nurse and a receptionist who help him in his office. "The girls can draw me a mental picture so that it's just as if I'm looking at it," he said.

Electrocardiograms and X-rays have to be sent out, but Dr. Hill does most of the work himself with the help of some unusual equipment. He uses an audiograph machine, a type of dictating machine, to make a small plastic record for each patient. He dictates information about the patient's visit into a microphone, and the machine cuts the record. The record is filed and pulled out and played each time the patient is in for an appointment.

Dr. Hill has stopped treating children, delivering babies and performing surgery, but he is taking new patients as well as some of his old patients who have returned to him. "I have more time to talk to patients than the average doctor," Dr. Hill said. Some patients come to him because they have heard that he is blind and they have visual troubles.

Dr. Hill, whose visual disability started because of diabetes, is medical advisor for the Golden Triangle Diabetic association which meets four to six times per year, "whenever we have a good program." The Golden Triangle group is a branch of the South Texas Diabetes association.

Dr. Hill lives by himself but has a maid to come in twice a week and do his cleaning. He eats breakfast at the office and sometimes eats lunch at the office or in a restaurant. He usually has his evening meals with relatives or friends.

"There are an awful lot of helpful people," Dr. Hill said. "I can do just about anything, given sufficient time," he said. "I do everything anyone else does; I just do it differently. . . ."

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## INCREASE ASKED FOR SHELTERED SHOP EMPLOYEES

"An increase in wage rates for handicapped sheltered workshop employees is warranted," Federal Wage-Hour Administrator, Robert D. Moran said in a speech before the National Association of Sheltered Workshops in New York City.

Mr. Moran said because of the rapid increase in the cost of living between 1968 and 1969, the wages received by a handicapped sheltered workshop employee last year generally would not be considered equitable today. "We expect workshops to make a conscientious effort to relate their wage scales to current prevailing wages in industry," he said.

Handicapped workers employed in sheltered workshops are permitted a special exception to the standard minimum wage requirements under a certification program administered by the Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division.

Moran noted that while the hourly statutory minimum wage rose to \$1.60 in 1968--or an increase of 14 percent over the 1967 rate of \$1.40--the average hourly earnings for all handicapped workers rose from 72 cents to 76 cents--for only a 6 percent increase. Probably the principal factor for this unanticipated disparity in wage increases is that many workshops did not make the wage increases they should have, Moran explained.

Moran also asked workshops to be especially careful to avoid unfair competitive practices with regular industry; to improve recordkeeping procedures; and to conduct frequent review of each handicapped worker's performance.

Among the new Wage and Hour Division programs the Administrator said sheltered workshops could expect in Fiscal Year 1970 are simplified procedures for the movement of sheltered workshop handicapped workers into competitive industry, and more definite work program guidelines for patients in hospitals, nursing homes, and related institutions.

Moran emphasized that the Division will continue to work closely with workshops, interested parties, and State agencies in making the Division's sheltered workshop program meaningful to handicapped workers.

Moran declared that the Division's investigations "clearly show a need for better enforcement of the Fair Labor Standards Act's provisions regulating sheltered workshops." As a result, he said he has called for improved enforcement action in the sheltered workshop area for Fiscal Year 1970. The Administrator explained that such enforcement action is needed to assure that handicapped workers receive proper wages and to prevent workshops from competing unfairly.

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## DON'T CALL US BLIND

by

Sherry Ricchiardi

[Reprinted from the Times-Democratic, Davenport-Bettendorf, Iowa]

Two long white canes propped against the kitchen wall are the only evidence of blindness in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Creig Slayton, yet both have been totally blind since early childhood. "We don't talk, act or think blind, and we don't feel crippled by our blindness. We can do anything anyone else can do with a little training," says Slayton, who is a field representative and counselor of the Cedar Rapids district office of the Iowa Commission for the Blind.

The couples' brightly-decorated home betrays their love for colors which in a manner they feel but cannot see. The front room is done in bright oranges and soft green. The bright red rug in the bedroom is complemented by black and white print curtains. They feel fabric and styles and wood when they buy furniture, and follow intuition--and sometimes the advice of sales persons--in the matter of color. "I blame that carpet on my husband! He fell in love with it, but he blames the wild curtains on me," giggles Mrs. Slayton, during a room by room tour of the house. "I'm really proud of our Amana table; it seats fourteen when we pull up the leaves. We had to have a big table because we do a lot of entertaining and I love to cook for a crowd. This will be the baby's room when Creig finishes building shelves and moving in furniture. It's just the right size for a child, don't you think?" she said pointing to a half-empty room that had already taken on the signs of a nursery.

She chatted about the "wonderful yard just perfect for gardening and barbecues," and the extra space in the kitchen where her husband could build shelves. She discussed the flowers along the house that she "just happened" to plant in time for this year, and mentioned that her husband enjoyed taking care of the yard. "We're going to have some dirt brought in next year and try to level it so we can plant more grass. This house has so many possibilities, we really love it," she said.

Mrs. Slayton gave birth a month ago to a healthy baby boy. She had the child by the natural childbirth method without an anesthetic, and her husband was with her through the delivery. "It was the most magnificent thing because we felt we could actually see the baby being born; we knew the moment he came into the world. I wouldn't have a baby any other way now," says Mrs. Slayton, cuddling the sleeping child. "We were a little frightened when we discovered I was pregnant because neither of us knew a thing about babies. I didn't take any pre-natal courses, but I did take in a post-natal class on how to bathe the baby while I was in the hospital recuperating."

The Slayton's, who have been married for five years, are candid about their blindness. "Ten years ago we wouldn't have been caught dead walking down the street with a cane because a cane said, 'I'm blind.' In those days, Iowans had a bad concept of blindness. People thought it rendered us totally helpless," says Mrs. Slayton. "Our lives really changed when we took some of the classes offered by the Iowa Commission for the Blind. The

program has helped make blindness more respectable in Iowa and it has taught us that we are no different than anyone else."

Her husband interrupted, "We look at blindness as being just one of many things that make up an individual, it need not be more than that. It may be a nuisance at times, but everything gets to be a nuisance once in a while. We do not feel that blindness is much of a limit to us."

While at the blind center in Des Moines, the couple learned cane travel, which has opened a whole new world. "Before we took to cane travel, we could just travel in areas with which we were thoroughly familiar. We wouldn't have thought about boarding a bus and heading for a strange place. We usually were dependent on other people to help us cross streets, and sometimes we had to travel on a person's arm. Now we are totally independent; we can go anywhere we like," says Slayton, stroking the plush black cat that "lives-in" with the family. "With the cane we can do all of our shopping and visiting on our own. The cane has enabled us to become real people and live a normal life."

Mrs. Slayton handles the grocery shopping either by calling in an order and having it delivered, or by going out to the neighborhood stores. "I have most of our groceries delivered because it's faster that way, and when we were both working I just didn't have time to shop."

Mrs. Slayton worked as a medical secretary at the Veteran's Administration Hospital here until just before her baby was born. She plans to return to work in a few weeks.

"A blind wife may have to handle her housework and cooking a little differently, but we get it done just as well as anyone else," she says.

To prepare the baby's bottles (she uses disposable ones) Mrs. Slayton uses a measuring cup instead of pouring directly into the bottle. "I can't see when the liquid gets to the level of the markings on the bottles, but that doesn't make any difference. I can feel the lines in the cup and tell by touch when the liquid reaches the right level. I think it's even faster this way because it isn't as tedious as edging the liquid into the bottle," she says.

Of their shopping sprees to buy furniture for the house they purchased last spring, Mrs. Slayton says, "We had a ball picking out the furniture, but sometimes we couldn't agree on style." Asked if store clerks are a help to her when she shops for clothing, she said, "I don't usually have difficulty with clerks, but there are some who don't know how to react to a blind person. I usually know the type of clothing I want to buy before I go into the store. If I'm familiar with the set-up I just walk up the rack of dresses my size and start thumbing through. I can tell the fabric and style by touch. If I'm in a strange store, I wait for a clerk to approach me, then I tell them what I want. Most clerks are very good about explaining the details of the styles, the price and color to me. I was furious with a clerk one day because I was shopping with a friend and the clerk kept asking my friend what I wanted like, 'What color does she want to see?' No matter how many times I answered her, she kept referring to me as 'she'."

Mr. and Mrs. Slayton agree that it is easy for a blind person to become belligerent when people are overly patronizing to them. "I realize that people mean well when they do it, but it makes me furious when someone comes up and asks to help me across a street. I usually just say, 'No thanks. I can make it by myself.' I try not to over-react because I might ruin their attitude for other blind people who just might need the help they offer," says Mrs. Slayton. "The nurse at the hospital offered me a wheel chair when I went to have the baby. I really over-reacted on that one. I said, 'No thanks, I can walk just fine.' I felt rather foolish when I found out that they offer the wheelchair to all pregnant women," she laughed.

The couple also agrees that the attitude of a person towards his blindness plays an important part in the life he leads. "A main part of my job is to travel around this part of Iowa and contact blind individuals to make them aware of the services available to them in their communities and through the state program. I try to help arrange the type of service that they feel would best meet their needs--be it in their general attitude toward their disability or to get them enrolled in a braille class."

Slayton feels that much of the success of Iowa's program for the blind is due to the Commission's director Kenneth Jernigan who came to the school in 1958. "Our program was ranked 48th in the country in 1958, but now we're ranked at the top and the system is known all over the world. People come from other states to study our methods, and we've even had people from other countries ask us for help," he says. "Our director has a firm belief that blind people can lead normal lives. His over-all philosophy is that we can do anything that other people do, and that has helped all of us gain more confidence.

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### THREE ACTION-PACKED MONTHS OF FEDERATIONISM

by

Clarence E. Collins

[Editor's Note: Mr. Collins is President of the Tar Heel State Federation of the Blind, the North Carolina affiliate of the NFB.]

The Metro Tar Heel Chapter, the Charlotte chapter of the Tar Heel Federation of the Blind, was organized August 2nd, 1969. Since at that time, the state affiliate was still in the planning stages, we thought it wise to elect our officers for ninety days. Therefore, a slate of temporary officers was elected as follows: President, Clarence E. Collins; Vice President, Gene Robbins; Secretary, Rudolph Moore; and Treasurer, George Best. We adopted our by-laws and with thirty charter members and no money, we went to work.

My work as president of a group of comparatively young men and women who knew little or nothing of Federationism was made more difficult by numerous false rumors circulated by some blind people who wanted desperately to see our organization fail. Nevertheless, I rolled up my sleeves and went after those rumors until I finally beat them down. I wrote dozens of letters, gave out loads of literature and spent hours on the

telephone in an effort to disprove their propaganda. And now, I believe they have finally given up in defeat.

We held a Chapter meeting August 27th and at that time the proposed by-laws were adopted with a few minor changes. I appointed chairmen of the various committees and for the sake of convenience and harmony each one selected his own committee members. We decided then to go to Greensboro, about one hundred miles away, to attend and participate in the organizational meeting of the Tar Heel State Federation of the Blind, which is our state affiliate of the NFB. Nearly all of us were on hand at this meeting and it was a wonderful success inspite of our usual quota of hecklers. Officers were elected and a constitution was adopted. I was elected president and now with two portfolios, I had my hands full.

Interest in our Chapter was kept up by promoting one project after another. We visited the South Carolina Aurora Club of the Blind and were given a warm reception. Don and Betty Capps showed us over the Center and explained to us some of their procedures in operating the organization. At another time, we raffled off a radio that two of our members had given to us, and still another time we held an auction sale of odds and ends that had been brought by our members. We sold to each other twenty jar openers that had been given to us by an Ohio Federationist. The ladies in our Chapter sold three hundred and fifty dollars of Stanley Products which produced seventy dollars in profit. We also earned seventy dollars for selling stainless steel ware. A half dozen of us sold drinks and sandwiches at a dog show and earned forty-eight dollars for the state organization. The mother of a blind baby who needed to have a club-sponsored Tupperware party in order to qualify as a District Sales Manager for that company, asked us to sponsor the party. We did and sold a hundred and thirty dollars of her merchandise. We have also sold nearly four hundred dollars worth of candy for the state organization. Our final project was in selling thirty linen calendars for a dollar each in fifteen minutes. We are having a Dutch Christmas banquet in lieu of a regular meeting in December.

Now in addition to the above mentioned projects, I have presided over ten meetings during the past three months. These were five board meetings and five regular chapter meetings. Without the cooperation and enthusiasm of the chapter members, these things could have never been done. All in all, I think we have done pretty well in only three months. At any rate, our chapter is no longer a tenderfoot, but a strong unit of the Federation movement and now with Mrs. Hazel Staley as our new president I believe we can go forward with the work for which we were organized.

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## STILL GOING STRONG AFTER TWENTY-SIX YEARS

by

Rosamond M. Critchley

There is a familiar saying to the effect that one good example is worth a hundred sermons—or maybe it's a thousand. Using the same logic, it may well be said that one blind person functioning successfully in competitive industry is worth the efforts of an army of rehabilitation counselors and public relations men, to convince people that it can be done. Such an example is found in the story of William H. Burke of Worcester, Massachusetts, who, in 1969 completed his twenty-sixth year as an employee of Rex Chain Belt Company.

Bill Burke received his early education in the Worcester public schools. He then attended Perkins School for the Blind, 1933-1943, where he was active in such sports as wrestling, swimming, track, etc.

In the summer of 1943 Burke started to work at Rex Chain Belt. It was supposed to be a wartime job, but he has been there ever since. Recently the company retired a blind worker from its Milwaukee plant, and there have been others, but as far as can be determined, Bill is their only blind employee at present.

His first assignment was inspecting work on the bench. Then he was asked to try machine work, and ran a lathe for two and a half years. After the war he was given a job in the grinding department, and that is where he may be found today.

"This", says Bill, "is an excellent job for a blind person. The machine has a long chute attached to it, which I feed from a big bin at my right, and the weight of the work going down the chute pushes it through the machine. This machine has two wheels—a grinding wheel that grinds the work, and the feed wheel that pulls it through the machine. The setup man sets the machine up, and all I have to do is run it."

Bill is past president of the Milestone Club, whose members have worked in the plant for fifteen years or more. At present there are over 220 in this club. He is now serving on the credit union committee. For a number of years he was on the company's bowling team, and he participates in all the other social functions which the plant puts on.

Bill's wife, Florence, is a registered nurse. They own their own home and lead an active and interesting social life. Bill is a charter member of the Worcester Chapter of the Associated Blind of Massachusetts, has served in a number of offices, including that of president, and is currently first vice-president. He also represents the chapter as member-at-large on the executive committee of the state organization.

While it is definitely not true, as some would have us believe, that every blind person is a kind of "Superman" who can do ordinary things in an extraordinary way, the above story is a good illustration of the actual truth—that when given an equal chance, the average blind man, like his sighted fellows, is well able to take his place in the world and to do every bit as good a job as the man next to him.



## BLIND PLUMBER CITED BY TRADE PRESS

[Editor's Note: The following story was published in Listen, published by the Catholic Guild for All the Blind, Newton, Massachusetts.]

What started as a public relations venture for Lee Brothers Corporation, manufacturers of plumbing equipment, turned into a real news story recently. In their search for plumbers who had been in business for forty or more years, they uncovered Joseph L. MacDonald of Dover, New Jersey, who had not only been active in the trade for forty-six years but had been blind for thirty-two of them. The story was picked up by trade publications and other news media. MacDonald, who is now seventy-three years old, started in the plumbing business in 1922. A victim of glaucoma, he was told he would be blind almost thirty-four years ago and proceeded to work on developing his sense of touch so that he could continue in business. Initially he was aided by two of his sons, but eventually reverted to going out on the jobs alone. He claims he can tell by touch whether a pipe or fixture is so much as an eighth of an inch off. He specializes in remodeling and "new jobs for old customers."

Now able to retire, since one son is running the business, he still enjoys his work and continues to be active. In his spare time he enjoys news broadcasts and his family which includes five sons and five daughters.

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## AMATEUR RADIO COURSE OFFERED FREE TO THE BLIND

About three years ago, The Hadley School for the Blind in Winnetka, Illinois, developed an amateur radio correspondence course, which is offered free to the blind. The successful completion of this course should enable the student to qualify for a General Class amateur operator's license. Hadley now has over 110 students enrolled and has graduated a goodly number, all of whom have been able to qualify for the General Class license.

It is of interest that one of these students is a medical doctor eighty-two years old, who recently lost his eyesight, and another graduating student is a senior at high school and has been blind from birth. Hadley has radio course students in New Zealand, Scotland, Mexico, the Philippines, India, and most of the states of the Union.

The course consists of fourteen lessons on seven inch tape reels at 3-3/4 IPS, taken from "Ameco Amateur Radio Theory Course", which includes a study guide, practice questions (multiple choice type), FCC type examinations, and Ameco's Junior and Advanced Continental Morse code courses (all with the kind permission of the copyright owners.) The text and circuit descriptions are also available in braille. Raised line embossed drawings of all schematics are also available.

Upon completion of each lesson, the student is requested to type or tape the answers to the questions and mail them directly to his instructor. For those interested, an introductory reel, describing the pleasures and values of amateur radio, together with an application, is mailed to the prospective student, upon request. Hadley School's address is 700 Elm Street, Winnetka, Illinois 60093. Byron C. Sharpe, W9BE, is Volunteer Chairman and one of the instructors and also the developer of this amateur radio program.

Hadley also has an amateur radio society station, WA9WHS. The Club station is equipped with a KWM1 transceiver and a Thunderbird 10, 15 and 20 beam. Members of the Society meet regularly and have an informal net on Saturdays at 14290 kc at 10:00 A.M. (CST) and also at 21425 kc at 10:30 A.M. (CST). President of the Society is WA9TQJ, Vice President is WA9VVD, and the Secretary is WA9RXU. Some of the students and former students are: WA9CLL, W3DRS, K5ZPM, KN3GBX, WA7HIO, W2ZEI, WA1JML, W8CIL, WA2ALQ, W4LUA. Technical advisory group for the radio course and the Society, includes: W2JIO, HC2LE/WA9WHS, W9\$UK, K9BCJ, W9JJH, W9BE, W2ALQ, W4LUA, and W9TO.

Inquiries about this radio course would be welcomed by the Hadley School.

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## THE LINGERING DEATH OF THE AMERICAN WELFARE SYSTEM

by

John L. Erlich\*

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Public welfare recipients and their allies are demanding the attention of the American people. No longer are the problems of public assistance being left to the discretion of supposedly nonpartisan professionals. The structure, function, and future of the welfare system have become political issues of the first order. An open season has been declared on the whole subject. As former President Johnson noted:

The welfare system pleases no one. It is criticized by liberals and conservatives, by the poor and the wealthy, by social workers and politicians, by whites and Negroes in every area of the nation.<sup>1</sup>

In a larger sense, the many-pronged attack on the welfare system is part of a major confrontation between two ideologies: the ideology of stability and the ideology of change. It is part of what former Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare John Gardner meant when he described us as being in deep trouble as a people. A central feature of this society-wide unrest is America's credibility deficit on the international market, brought to a head by the Vietnam war. The disruption in America's urban areas--caused largely by a

second credibility gap between promise and fulfillment—is also a fundamental aspect of the dissolving consensus about America's future. As Oglesby and Shaull suggest, our legitimate concern for stability and order

is dominated by an ideological perspective that so distorts the whole picture that it leads to an obsession with stability, minimizes the need for change, and is willing to go to any length to eliminate the threat of violence—except in defense of the established order. The end result of this ideological blindness is our failure to see that such stress upon stability may make an explosive situation more unstable, and that this way of dealing with violence can make a violent situation more probable.<sup>2</sup>

Riots, student demonstrations, picketing of welfare offices, and other forms of civil disobedience may be seen as symptoms, not causes, of the political malaise. Like certain medical phenomena, they may even represent the systems efforts to cure itself. In any case, recent attempts to treat these symptoms—suggesting that looters be shot, student demonstrators be expelled, or welfare mothers receive no support for children born out of wedlock—will only mask the real disease and condemn the democratic body politic to an early death.

The heavy strain placed on the ideology of stability has fostered two crises that are especially significant. Each has an independent political life, yet each is fundamentally intertwined with the other. To begin with, the general public now sees the welfare system as a critical area of governmental expenditure, but unlike the financing of public education, one over which it has little control. At the same time, social science research has suggested that the dimensions of public assistance constitute a crisis in social structure—the hardening of a permanently dependent class.<sup>3</sup> This class, the welfare poor, is coming more and more clearly to understand that it is the structure of the assistance system itself that maintains its dependency, a structure that can only be altered by an escalation of the fiscal emergency sufficient to force society at large to change the system.

This paper attempts to delineate the current status of public assistance in America and the significance of welfare recipients as a growing “political” constituency. The susceptibility of the assistance bureaucracy to external attack will be explored, along with the strategies now being utilized to force the scrapping of the present welfare system. It concludes with some observations about what may happen if these strategies are not successful. A central thesis is that further attempts to prop up this bankrupt enterprise are likely to contribute to a worsening of the enormous tensions with which our society is confronted, and the most logical alternative is provision of a guaranteed annual income.<sup>4</sup>

As a profession, social work has a penchant for positive thinking. Former Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare Wilbur J. Cohen, to cite one rather obvious example, continuously said that the repressive 1967 welfare amendments would somehow have positive results. Perhaps a bit more negative thinking is in order. Like any articulate

minority, social workers are more likely to achieve positive changes by openly and steadfastly criticizing inequities and pushing for a model system, rather than by merely seeking incremental goals that will somehow accumulate to create the kind of welfare system that is wanted. Opting for the incremental approach has been not only a delusion, but also an attempt to perpetuate a fraud on the poor. In manning the bureaucratic battlements, social workers have become second-string emissaries of a power structure that has yet to accept the poor as people. If we cannot effectively lobby for our own professional interests, through what sort of political legerdemain can we hope to make the government come to terms with the poor?

The sheer size of the population depending on public assistance for sustenance has created a new quasi-political constituency. Of the approximately eight million persons receiving such aid, 4.5 million are children, 2.1 million are aged, and over 700,000 suffer from blindness or a similar incapacity. Because of the substantial numbers in many large urban areas (in New York City alone more than 525,000 people receive AFDC) and the fact that the overwhelming majority are children, older people and the physically handicapped, the welfare poor represent not so much a voting force to be reckoned with as a moral problem that is politically potent.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, by a conservative estimate, this eight million represents less than one-quarter of those who by federal standards should be regarded as poor.<sup>6</sup> Cloward and Piven have noted that even with current stringent eligibility standards, there is one person eligible for assistance who is not now receiving it for every one who is on the rolls.<sup>7</sup> This is not particularly due to the ineptitude of administrators or bureaucratic intransigence, but rather how the system is supposed to work. The welfare agencies themselves are caught in a serious dilemma, one that might in political terms leave them open to a conflict-of-interest charge. On the one hand, they are committed to helping their clients; on the other, they are charged by the local government with the responsibility for keeping costs down. Obviously, it is virtually impossible to raise the level of payments and increase services, while at the same time minimize both the per unit and cumulative costs.

This situation is by no means enhanced by the psychologically explosive nature of the donor-donee relationship. The dependency of the recipient is bound to evoke the disdain of the dispensers of aid. At the same time, those who find themselves in a dependent and a subservient situation must, by the very nature of the relationship thus created, learn to hate those who disdain them or suffer the erosion of their manhood.

The concentration of black welfare poor in urban areas is a fact that no longer requires repetition. But the role of poor blacks in the Black Power movement is critical to this analysis. In effect, a coalition has been formed among welfare recipients, poor persons with jobs, young and relatively well-educated black militants, and some black intellectuals in a mood ebony. However, the thrust of this movement is more political than cultural, more power oriented than integration minded. It also rejects the substitution of the problem of poverty for the tougher problem of racism. Carmichael and Hamilton describe it this way:

The adoption of the concept of Black Power is one of the most legitimate and healthy developments in American politics and race

relations in our time...It is a call for black people in this country to unite, to recognize their own heritage, to build a sense of community...to begin to define their own goals, to lead their own organizations and to support those organizations.<sup>8</sup>

The political direction of black action is specifically delineated:

The concept of Black Power rests on a fundamental premise: before a group can enter the open society, it must first close ranks. By this we mean that group solidarity is necessary before a group can operate effectively from a bargaining position of strength in a pluralistic society.<sup>9</sup>

As in the areas of housing, education, and employment, in the welfare system the "action lag" between the verbal commitment to a decent standard for all and the legislative and administrative implementation of this commitment is not only tremendous, but reprehensible. Recent spurts in technology, the rapid expansion of the economy, and the availability of a whole new range of luxury consumer goods and services only dramatize and increase the gap between promise and delivery. With the well-documented rise in ghetto marginal employment, new strata of poor people are becoming conscious of themselves as a group and as part of a larger disadvantaged class whose objective it may be to press for societal change in the distribution of income.

As a target for radical change through external attack, the public welfare bureaucracy offers more than enough potential to warm the heart of even the most hard-nosed, anti-Establishment radical. One militant organizer recently put it this way: "I don't know where we'd be without the welfare system to blast apart." In typical radical rhetoric, it has been referred to as "the soft under-belly of the white colonialist power structure."<sup>10</sup> But to be more specific: Why is there hope of a change in public assistance policies, procedures, and machinery that would be brought about by pressure from outside the system?

In the first place the welfare system is a target that is geographically accessible. The distribution of public assistance is largely a state and local responsibility, despite increasing federal involvement in supervisory and reimbursement arrangements. Much administrative discretion—in such areas as informing people of what they are entitled to, accepting or rejecting claims for benefits, and the processes by which those who are assumed to be "chiseling" may be sought out—is practiced at the local level. The "cut-'em-off-and-make-'em-apply-again" approach, to cite a particularly disreputable practice, is used extensively by many local departments to control clients whose behavior is found to be objectionable. Thus, the proximity of the clients to the decision-making apparatus they wish to change is especially relevant for external strategies of intervention.

Second, except in the field of education, there are few bureaucracies that are more



poorly equipped to deal with the problems with which they are confronted. The conflicting demands of saving money and saving people render rational goal-setting impossible. If, in the course of human affairs, such a conflict can turn an individual into a neurotic, imagine the psychosis it is likely to engender in a whole system! From the top administrative level to the greenest intake worker, relatively few welfare employees are adequately trained to handle either the economic or social service aspects of their jobs, let alone the conflict between them. One local welfare executive said he was willing to bet that no corporation the size of his department had a more inadequately trained staff, a higher staff turnover, a more confusing set of goals, or produced even half as many memos. In sum, the welfare system is plagued by a series of archaic and grossly inadequate organizational arrangements.

A third reason why the welfare system makes such a succulent objective has to do with its declining ability to recruit skilled administrators or to obtain the services of able young people. At the same time, younger, more articulate staff members within the system have more and more involved themselves in the development of unions aimed at both improving their own working conditions and challenging the system. A recent report on the mood and the posture of social work students suggests that the welfare system will only hasten its own demise by recruiting this new breed into its ranks.

Their experience (in the civil rights movement, peace corps, VISTA, etc.) has taught them that most social agencies are concerned mainly with their own aggrandizement; that most public assistance programs are degrading to the recipient of aid; that the hardened arteries of welfare bureaucracies make them virtually immune to significant change; and that the voice of social work was one of the last to be heard in support of the Negro revolution. Now students are asking that practitioners and teachers of social work either prove that they are willing to back up the ideas and values they espouse, or stop preaching them.<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, many observers have noted the inability of the public welfare power structure to deal effectively with the range of articulate interest groups that have increasingly made demands on them.<sup>12</sup> Among other things, this inadequacy has resulted in a tendency to sacrifice the fundamental client goal of adequate income to a variety of demands by other groups in such areas as medical services, casework, day care, and the like. Because of the way in which the welfare system reacts to interest group pressures, a measured response to the demands of each constituency is virtually impossible.

It has been clearly noted that the welfare system itself has developed grossly inadequate machinery for internal change—not just of a radical nature, but even of a step or incremental type. While it has been repeatedly suggested that this machinery can be beefed up or streamlined, the evidence to date suggests that this is a rather vain hope.<sup>13</sup> Obviously the inability of local welfare departments to adjust quickly and efficiently to changing situations and demands offers a variety of opportunities for those attempting to upset the system.

Moreover, the welfare program is fundamentally tied in with, as the New Left would have it, the Establishment, or, more specifically, the local political power system. Thus, systemic pressures have a vital meaning for the welfare system but also offer a point of political and moral leverage. It has been suggested:

the system has already been subverted to its continuous accommodation to powerful groups arrayed against the poor and the minorities in the local community. Consequently, recipients are victimized by the discrepancy between the statutes governing the system, which are bad enough, and day-to-day rules and practices, which are far worse. The purpose of a recipients' movement is not to subvert government any further but to reveal how other political forces have already succeeded in subverting it and then to press for major economic reforms.<sup>14</sup>

As has been implied throughout this paper, the problems of public assistance are at bottom political, not social. Thus a meaningful strategy for changing the system from without must be politically relevant. To achieve change in a system the size of the welfare bureaucracy, which has pervasive effects across the land, requires more than a few tactical maneuvers. Obviously the election of a few concerned liberals from ghetto areas with many welfare recipients is not going to make much of a dent. For the recipients of public assistance, the traditional notion of building broad political coalitions is also not feasible. That is, in any coalition, the recipient constituency is likely to come to the bargaining table with the least influence. Material benefits to be gained by other members of the obvious potential coalition—labor unions, liberal intellectuals, and the like—are liable to be more symbolic than real.

The strategies being used to change the welfare system incrementally from within are almost as varied as the policies and practices under attack. Assaults from outside the structure utilize a variety of direct action tactics, but there is a single, fundamental objective: the creation of an economic and political crisis that will bring about the end of the current welfare Establishment. Since its inception, the National Welfare Rights Organization has come to symbolize this strategy.<sup>15</sup>

If a single set of events could be said to have launched the national welfare rights movement, perhaps they occurred on June 30, 1966. On that day more than 6,500 people in Columbus, New York, Baltimore, Washington, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston, Louisville, Chicago, Trenton, and fifteen other cities simultaneously demonstrated against the welfare system. Although a wide range of demands were made, which varied greatly from city to city, a central feature of each demonstration was a call for higher grant levels.<sup>16</sup>

The fundamental approach being utilized by those associated with the welfare rights movement—pushing single-mindedly for the maximum possible benefits for recipients—has a certain internal consistency. Unlike many other mass-based organizing efforts of the recent past whose results often showed a short-term net loss, effective welfare rights activities achieve immediate material gains for those who participate. In addition, benefits are being claimed for those not now on the rolls but who are ostensibly eligible, those who have been

illegally discharged from the rolls, and those already receiving assistance who are not receiving full benefits as prescribed by law.<sup>17</sup> On the basis of a variety of local, state, and federal court actions, new recipients are being recruited all over the country.

This strategy, largely aimed at creating a political crisis by overloading the welfare system, owes much of its development to Cloward and Piven. In their view, the strategy is designed to work as follows:

Each time a welfare group turns to some other issue—such as agitating for a day care center—it wastes its one source of potential power. Campaigns to get benefits will produce pervasive and persistent turmoil; bureaucratic turmoil because cumbersome (and unconstitutional) procedures for review and surveillance will break down; fiscal turmoil as welfare costs rise in localities where existing sources of tax revenue are already overburdened; and political turmoil, especially within the urban democratic coalition, as an alerted electorate divides on the question of how to overcome this disruption in local government. Reverberations of local trouble will be felt at the national level, and in the ensuing debate over remedies to relieve local conflict, the poor and their allies can press for fundamental reforms.<sup>18</sup>

Under the direction of George Wiley, a former professor of chemistry at Syracuse University and later associate director of the Congress of Racial Equality, the National Welfare Rights Organization has been active in over forty states and one hundred cities. Its membership includes 250 affiliated groups made up of more than thirty thousand people.<sup>19</sup> Numerous local groups are in various stages of formation and affiliation.

The organization offers the following goals:

Jobs or income now--decent jobs with adequate pay for those who can work; and adequate pay for those who cannot work.

1. Adequate income: a system which guarantees enough money for all Americans to live dignified lives above the level of poverty.

2. Dignity: a system which guarantees recipients the same freedoms, rights, and respect of all American citizens.

3. Justice: a fair and open system which guarantees recipients the full protection of the Constitution.

4. Democracy: a system which guarantees recipients direct participation in the decisions under which they must live.<sup>20</sup>

Recently the National Welfare Rights Organization has recommended a national,

guaranteed minimum income of \$4,000 for every American family. The base family numbers four. The grant would be increased or decreased by \$500 per person depending on whether the number of persons in the family would be more or less than four. For the first time a national recipients' organization is also suggesting that there be cost-of-living adjustments in this annual income, that it be administered by a simple affidavit (much in the style of the federal income tax), and that a work incentive feature be included that will allow families to keep earnings of at least twenty-five percent above their guaranteed income.<sup>21</sup>

At the local level, the crisis-inducing strategy has a particular strength, because any effort that is successful in obtaining benefits from the local welfare system is likely to have fiscal reverberations at both the state and national levels. Thus, even groups that do not wish to affiliate with the National Welfare Rights Organization are, in fact, contributing to its efforts. Local programs to squeeze concessions from the welfare department have been fielded by community unions and other affiliates of Students for a Democratic Society, a number of militant church-sponsored projects, and many of the organizations in which Saul Alinsky and his Industrial Areas Foundation have been involved. Some anti-poverty projects have assisted in the attack. Also, radical political groups (e.g. Citizens for New Politics) have begun to give some assistance to organizing welfare recipients, along with local chapters of the National Association of Social Workers and, increasingly, activist students—undergraduates as well as social work graduate students—around the country. Recently, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference has joined in the confrontation. Recipient groups with bases as small as the local block or as large as an entire city, have organized around a variety of issues, but they always include some having to do with the inadequacy of assistance payments. More and more, these groups are coming together to form coalitions of recipients around relevant political boundaries—from council and congressional districts to metropolitan areas.

In New York City, for example, some 10,000 families participated in a campaign to force the welfare department to meet its own minimum standards and have received checks that average about \$300.<sup>22</sup> Thus, more than three million dollars was wrested from the welfare system, thereby exacerbating both the welfare financing crisis and the fiscal emergency facing New York City. Proportionately smaller campaigns mounted in such cities as Columbus, Detroit, and Chicago have resulted in similar kinds of benefit awards. It might be well to add that at the community level, not only social work students, but young activist workers, have pushed their older colleagues into a more active involvement with local welfare rights groups. Nationally, hundreds of social workers are serving as consultants to or organizers of such local associations.

Increasingly, groups of recipients are coming together on a regional and statewide basis to make broader demands on the welfare system. Among other things, this sort of client activism has resulted in raising many of the current welfare issues to the level of public debate in the mass media. At state and regional levels, welfare recipients are receiving assistance from statewide NASW groups, labor unions such as the United Auto Workers, and some reform-oriented Democratic party splinter organizations. These groups have received



some additional impetus for their work from an increasing number of intellectual, business and labor leaders who have called publicly for some kind of guaranteed annual income.

Nationally, as we suggested earlier, the movement of welfare recipients is becoming larger, more articulate, and better able to exercise political influence in Congress, the public media, and, thus, in the arena of public opinion. Apparently, the defense of the welfare system is being left to the professionals. Indeed, even the taxpayers are coming to understand that their money has often been spent on more prestigious kinds of services that have served mainly to enhance the reputation of the professionals, while making little or no impact on the problem of poverty.

Debates over a guaranteed annual income are becoming largely academic.<sup>23</sup> The key question now is: What form should the guaranteed annual income take and how should it be paid? The petrification of the welfare system's bureaucratic limbs is too well documented to bear repetition. However, the danger of letting public assistance die of increasing paralysis, brought on by the Welfare Rights Movement and its allies should not be minimized. At best, able administrators and spokesmen within the system can only encourage its early demise. By advocating the possibility of incremental change, rather than the dismantling of the system itself in favor of some form of income guarantee, the violent disruptions that have become a part of this nation's social scene over the past few years may become intensified. Must we not say with Daniel Moynihan:

What is needed now is a strategy of income equalization...the problem of the poor is that they are excluded from the larger society because they do not have the income needed to sustain an "average" life. As a result we have built up a dual system under which the goods and services—from food stuffs to marriage counseling—which most persons purchase in the market place are provided the welfare population by the government....There will be no end of this until the incomes of the poor are brought up to average levels.<sup>24</sup>

In the growing polarization between black and white, between poor and rich in this nation, the social work profession would be doing a disservice to the clients whose interests it has sworn to uphold by settling for attempts to make the current welfare system better in any incremental way. There is the corollary danger that these apparent "solutions" will be grasped by conservative groups trying to withhold adequate income and services from the "undeserving" poor. Thus, we run the dual hazard, not only of selling out clients, but of selling out everything we supposedly stand for at the same time. Social workers are badly isolated as it is, and we run the risk of standing alone behind an archaic, dehumanizing bureaucracy that has long outlived its usefulness.

A recent study by Herman P. Miller of income distribution in the United States revealed that over the period 1947-1962 there were minimal shifts in the distribution of income among the various segments of the population. The top fifth has continued to acquire approximately fifty percent of the national income, the top five percent about twenty percent, while the bottom fifth received but five percent.<sup>25</sup>



If we social workers do not vigorously join forces in support of those who advocate some form of guaranteed annual income, we would do well to heed this little poetic admonition:

The Upper Five gets its 20;  
Bangles, booze, and broads a-plenty;  
The Lower Twenty gets its 5;  
Just enough to stay alive.  
When the pie's in such a plight  
Better lock the door at night.<sup>26</sup>

#### FOOTNOTES

\* John L. Erlich, MSW, is Assistant Professor of Social Work, School of Social Work, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan. This paper is a revised version of one prepared for the National Conference on Social Welfare, San Francisco, California, May 1968.

1. As quoted in "Welfare Law Challenge," Washington Bulletin, Vol. 20, No. 33 (February 5, 1968), p. 168.

2. Carl Oglesby and Richard Shaull, Containment and Change (New York: Macmillan Co., 1967), p. 223.

3. See, for example, Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, Beyond the Melting Pot (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1963), esp. pp. 25-85; and Ben Seligman, Permanent Poverty: An American Syndrome (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968).

4. A useful discussion of this problem is to be found in Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (New York: Bantam Books, 1968), p. 457.

5. Ibid., p. 458.

6. For a further discussion of this point, see Richard A. Cloward and Frances Fox Piven, "We've Got Rights: The No-Longer Silent Welfare Poor," The New Republic, Vol. 158, No. 6 (August 5, 1967), pp. 23-24.

7. Richard A. Cloward and Frances Fox Piven, "A Strategy to End Poverty," The Nation, Vol. 202, No. 18 (May 2, 1966), p. 510.

8. Stokeley Carmichael and Charles Hamilton, Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1967), p. 44.

9. Ibid., p. 45.

10. Students for a Democratic Society, "The Anti-Welfare State," p. 3. Unsigned position paper on public welfare, March 1967.

11. John L. Erlich and John M. Riley, "A New Breed of Social Worker?" Renewal, Vol. 8, No. 1 (January-February 1968), p. 23.

12. See, for example, Sydney Bernard and Philip Booth, "Public Assistance Power Structure." Paper prepared for the National Conference on Social Welfare, San Francisco, California, May 1968. (Mimeographed.)

13. One approach to this problem is discussed in Robert A. Scott, "Selecting Clients for Welfare Agencies," Social Problems, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Winter 1967), pp. 253-255.

14. Richard A. Cloward and Frances Fox Piven, "The Weapon of Poverty: The Birth of a Movement," The Nation, Vol. 204, No. 19 (May 8, 1967), p. 587.

15. See, for example, Joseph E. Paull, "Recipients Aroused: The New Welfare Rights Movement," Social Work, Vol. 12, No. 2 (April 1967), pp. 101-106.

16. Cloward and Piven, "The Weapon of Poverty: The Birth of a Movement," p. 582.

17. For a discussion of the development of some key legal issues, see Charles A. Reich, "The Individual Rights and Social Welfare: The Emerging Legal Issues," Yale Law Review, Vol. 74, No. 7 (June 1965), pp. 1245-1257.

18. Cloward and Piven, "The Weapon of Poverty: The Birth of a Movement," p. 587.

19. Welfare Rights Organization in Action, Vol. 1, No. 1 (April 1969), p. 1. This newsletter is published by the National Welfare Rights Organization, Washington, D. C.

20. National Welfare Leaders Newsletter, Vol. 2, No. 6 (April 15, 1968), p. 10.

21. National Welfare Leaders Newsletter, Vol. 2, No. 7 (May 6, 1968), p. 14.

22. Cloward and Piven, "The Weapon of Poverty: The Birth of a Movement," p. 585.

23. See, for example, T. George Harris, "Do We Owe People a Living?" Look, Vol. 32, No. 9 (April 30, 1968), pp. 25-27.

24. Daniel P. Moynihan, "The Crisis in Welfare," The Public Interest, No. 10 (Winter 1968), pp. 23-24.

25. As quoted in "The Rich Always With Us," The New Republic, Vol. 158, No. 19 (May 11, 1968), p. 4.

26. Ibid., p. 4.

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## MONITOR MINIATURES

As we go to press (December 15, 1969) with the February, 1970 issue of the Braille Monitor, it seems that this was the week that was! The House of Representatives has just passed a bill for a flat two-year extension of the Office of Economic Opportunity. The Senate has already passed it, but with the Murphy Amendment which would give the Governors of the States veto power over legal aid to the poor. The bill now goes to conference. The California Supreme Court has just rejected the petition of the State Department of Social Welfare for a review of the Appellate Court's ruling that the cost-of-living increase may not be decreased by the amount of the medical care component, as contended successfully by the California Council of the Blind. Hence, recipients of Aid to the Blind will receive \$28 in retroactive aid since December 1, 1968 and recipients of Old Age Security and Aid to the Disabled \$14. The minimum grant of Aid to the Blind in California is now \$152 a month and the maximum \$202. Both the Senate and the Ways and Means Committee of the House have approved a 15 percent increase in social security benefits, effective January 1st. The President's Commission on Violence just reported to the

President, listing some eighty-one specific recommendations which all boil down to one conclusion—unless this Nation stops pouring billions of dollars a year into Vietnam and Moon ventures, and uses the money to cure our domestic ills, the country is in deep trouble from which it may never emerge. The most hopeful trend of all is the fact that for the past three or four years, a series of court actions—both state and national—have successfully challenged public welfare rules and regulations, capped by the U. S. Supreme Court holding that state durational residence for public assistance is unconstitutional. For the first time, the poor have real and effective advocacy in our courts. What happens to one of us happens to all of us, and things are definitely looking up.

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The Hawaii Federation of the Blind held an all-day seminar on Services for the Blind in Honolulu the latter part of November. Kenneth Hopkins, Director of the Idaho Commission for the Blind, spoke on Developing a Vocational Rehabilitation Agency for the Blind. John Taylor, Assistant Director of the Iowa Commission for the Blind, discussed Employment and the Rehabilitation Agency for the Blind. Mrs. Florence Grannis, Assistant Director of the Iowa Commission for the Blind, told of the Philosophy of an Effective Library Program for the Blind. The Editor of the Monitor discussed Aid to the Blind. The seminar was capped by a panel discussion moderated by Dr. Floyd W. Matson, Professor of American Studies at the University of Hawaii. Participants not only included the aforementioned speakers but also lively audience interest and reaction.

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Dr. Lois Whiley of Oak Park, Illinois claimed the first national bridge championship ever won by a blind person in the history of the American Contract Bridge League competition. Mrs. Whiley, and her guide dog, have been familiar sights at national bridge tournaments for almost ten years. She brings her own set of duplicate boards with cards which have been brailled. Opponents call their cards to her during play and if her partner is dummy, he calls out all his cards as he lays them on the table. Mrs. Whiley must try to remember the cards played—and apparently does!

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The Union Pacific Railroad has donated 2,000 audio tapes to the Nebraska State Services for the Visually Impaired to help in teaching blind students. The tapes, with an original value of about \$78,000 had been designed for electronic data processing at the railroad. The company is switching to a new type of computer tape. Volunteers will read textbooks and other instructional material onto the tapes. After processing is completed, more than 8,000 seven-hundred-foot reels of audio tape will be available to blind students from grade school to college in Nebraska.

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A blind welfare worker in California was recently fired because she took one of her welfare clients to a San Francisco clinic at her own expense. It is said by the county welfare department that the worker violated a department regulation against travel outside the county. The worker twice had the same welfare recipient driven in her car to the San Francisco clinic for surgery when other travel arrangements fell through. She will have a hearing before the County Merit System Bureau and, if unsuccessful there, her attorney plans to take the matter to the courts.

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Science writers recently warned of the dangers of oxygen to the vision of both divers and spacemen. Both may face the risk of developing cataracts. The diver, in whom high concentrations of oxygen are used to minimize decompression problems, may undergo alterations in his lens. The spaceman, in whose environment system oxygen is minimized to reduce fire hazards, may develop lens changes through the effects of X-irradiation.

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In June the Liberty Chapter of the Pennsylvania Federation of the Blind enjoyed its first sweet taste of legislative success, reports James T. Walsh. After a year of continuous effort, the City Council of Philadelphia unanimously passed its Public Accommodations Bill. This bill will make it possible for blind and otherwise handicapped persons to avail themselves of public facilities, such as restaurants, hotels, bars, motels, and real-estate rental agencies. It is necessary to stress, however, that the person who believes that he has been discriminated against must prove that the instance of discrimination occurred on the basis of his handicap. This "burden of proof" must be carried by the individual to the Human Relations Commission before corrective action can be taken.

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Here is an upside-down welfare system: The United States will spend \$390 million in 1969 to maintain 10,000 farmers and farm corporations, while spending \$335 million to underwrite low-rent public housing for the poor. Secretary of Agriculture Clifford M. Hardin declared that more than \$1 billion dollars in payments to farmers during 1968 were pure and simple income supplements, the equivalent of a guaranteed annual wage. They had nothing to do with marketing quotas or crop diversion. Moreover, most of the money went to the most successful and wealthy farms. More than 80 percent of the payments went to less than 20 percent of the farmers. In a country where thousands of people are in need of supplemental food and in a world where millions are on the verge of starvation, there would seem to be a basic political immorality in paying people not to grow food. And there is surely something haywire with our priorities when government is generous to the rich and niggardly to the poor.

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When in Washington, stay at the YMCA advised Tom Bickford of our Capitol Affiliate. It was not that the "Y" was closed to blind persons, it just looked that way to John Jackson when he came to Washington, D. C., earlier this year. The desk clerk who refused Jackson a room finally gave in after a long discussion when John insisted he had no place else to stay. How many of us have had a similar experience? John, who is now an employee of the Federal Government, spoke of his experience to Janice Conard and Tom Bickford, who work in the same department and are members of the Capitol Chapter, NFB. They decided to take it on as a chapter project. Tom went to the "Y" and had no trouble, either in registering or staying overnight. After comparing notes, John and Tom decided that there was probably no discriminatory policy, just a fearful clerk. A few weeks later the two of them visited with Fred Carl, Director, and Roger Scrimshaw, Director of Residence for the Washington YMCA, who received Tom and John very cordially. Both assured them that there was in fact no discriminatory policy and that the staff would be instructed to give service to blind persons and render assistance when necessary. The name of the game is "work through the Federation". Don't let yourself be sold short, but insist on equality and opportunity. Lastly, pick up the easy ones when you can--there will be plenty of tough ones later.

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Nearly one hundred members and guests of the Des Moines Association of the Blind heard Kenneth Jernigan, NFB President and Director of the Iowa Commission for the Blind, deliver a speech challenging all to keep pushing ahead even as things get better for us at the annual Banquet held on September 20th. Secretary of State Melvin Synhorst, and several members of the Iowa Legislature, indicated they were behind the efforts toward social and economic betterment. Lieutenant Governor Roger Jepson, who was unable to attend because of illness, sent a letter indicating approval of the program.

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Older persons who entered the hospital under Medicare on or after January 1st of this year are responsible for an additional \$8 of their hospital bills. The increase resulted from a provision in the law requiring an annual review of hospital costs under Medicare, and an adjustment of the portion of the hospital bill for which a Medicare beneficiary is responsible if these costs have risen substantially. In announcing the increase in the deductible amount from \$44 to \$52, the Social Security officials noted that the hospital bill for an average stay by a Medicare beneficiary now runs about \$700. The increase of \$8 is a result of the long term trend toward increasing hospital costs and also results in part from the general inflation that has been taking place. When a Medicare beneficiary has a hospital stay of more than sixty days he will pay \$13 a day for the sixty-first through the nintieth day, up from the previous \$11 per day. If he has a post-hospital stay of over twenty days in an extended care facility, he will pay \$6.50 per day toward the cost of the twenty-first day through the one hundredth day, up from the previous \$5 50 per day.

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Julius D. Morris of New Britain, Connecticut was elected National President of the Blinded Veterans Association. Morris was born in South Carolina in 1923. He joined the National Guard at the age of sixteen and was inducted into the Army in 1941. He served in the European Theatre from 1942 to 1945, when he was seriously wounded and lost his eyesight while fighting with the 753rd Tank Battalion. After receiving training at Avon, Connecticut, Morris went back to South Carolina, finished his high school education and entered the University of South Carolina. Five years later he graduated from that University's School of Law, passed the Bar in 1953, and is presently engaged in the practice of law in New Britain. In 1962 Morris ran for the State Legislature from New Britain, was elected, and has been a representative since then. He is the first blind person to be elected to the Connecticut House.

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A dinner celebrating the one-year-ago founding of the Delaware Federation of the Blind was held December 13, at the Executive Club, Wilmington, Delaware. Sixty-two Federationists, their families and friends listened attentively to John N. Taylor, former President of the National Federation of the Blind and Assistant Director of the Iowa Commission for the Blind, as he discussed needless obstacles that compound the difficulties of trying to live, blind, in our sighted world. In addition to the featured speaker from Des Moines, Iowa, other luminaries in the organized blind movement were present at the "Happy Birthday" Delaware dinner: John McCraw, President of the Maryland Affiliate; Ned Graham, Member of the NFB Executive Committee; Mae Davidow, President of the Pennsylvania Federation of the Blind and also Member of the NFB Executive Committee; Virginia Nagle, President of the Washington, D. C. Affiliate; and John Nagle, Chief of the Federation's Washington Office. "Just exactly one year ago tonight," announced Joseph Spence, Delaware Federation President, "we organized the Delaware Federation of the Blind. Forty-one people attended that meeting, and thirty-one joined. Now, only one year later, we have eighty-three members."

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The Arkansas Convention was held November 16 at the Hotel LaFayette, with talks of interest taken from the Monitor and President Jernigan's letters. The banquet was attended by many and was a highlight since the members got to meet and know each other and their families. The following officers were elected for the ensuing year: President, Richard Nelsen, 4516 Kenyon Road, Little Rock 72205; First Vice President, Mrs. Alpha Ennis, Little Rock; Second Vice President, Charlie Banks, Little Rock; Secretary, Miss Ramona Ennis, Little Rock; and Treasurer, Mrs. Gladys Nelsen, Little Rock.

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